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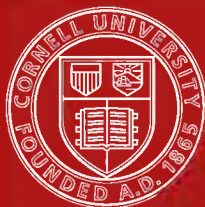
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The Gospel according to Christ :



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**The Gospel According to Christ.**



# The Gospel According to Christ

And Other Sermons

BY

**Charles C. Albertson**

Pastor of the Delaware Avenue  
Methodist Episcopal Church,  
Buffalo, N. Y. . . . .

Buffalo

The Christian Literature Company

1899



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## INTRODUCTION.

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"THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO CHRIST," is a good start for a fresh and helpful volume. Daniel Webster, in opening his most celebrated speech in reply to Hayne of South Carolina, January 26, 1830, passed into his argument against nullification through this most beautiful opening, viz.: "When the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather and on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance of the sun, to take his latitude and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course." In this volume we are enabled to imitate this prudence. In the storm and confused utterances of theological and humanitarian controversies and disquisitions that characterize our time as an age of many gospels, it is most refreshing to have a glance at the Gospel according to Christ. This glance at the Sun of Righteousness may help us to determine how far we have drifted.

One beauty of this book is found in the fact that Mr. Albertson does not keep the apostles forever on trial for perjury, but sends them about doing good everywhere. This is not a volume of apologetics. It is rather a new and gentle reincarnation of New Testament utterances. It does not advance upon us with the fixed bayonets of the old heavy infantry of compulsion; but it glides quietly along in front of us, beckoning us onward and upward to higher

levels of life and wider horizons of privilege. It is a Gospel of this time and for this people. It credits our age with having reached the point where gravitation, shifting, turns the other way.

The public mind is fed and overfed on secular information and stimulated with brilliant fiction. The ever-rattling presses daily carpet every city and town with reading matter of the earth, earthy. Magazines and text-books familiarize us with a vast nomenclature, partly scientific and wholly secular, till there seems neither opportunity nor desire to feed or develop our spiritual natures. This volume, waving an olive branch and offering peace, slides into the moving mass of literature, and proposes to do its full share in meeting the essential wants of the people.

It makes no apology, for it offers no affront. It stands on its own feet. It extends its own hands. Beneath its feet is the solid rock of Divine Revelation. In its hands are peace for time and life for eternity.

When you have read its pages, applied its precepts, and appropriated its revelations, I am sure you will be better and stronger.

C. H. FOWLER.

EPISCOPAL RESIDENCE, BUFFALO, N. Y.

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**The Gospel According to Christ.**

"I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion as it came from Christ himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it."

—*Letters of Charles Dickens*. Vol. II., page 467.

"It is most interesting and instructive, we repeat, to observe how all the patent methods that have been adopted outside of, or in opposition to, Christianity, for the reformation of society, have, one after another, gone to the wall or gone to the dogs. A dream, and a few futile or disastrous experiments, are all that ever comes of them."

—J. G. HOLLAND, *Every-day Topics*. Page 142.

"Rejecting, as we must, whatever is inconsistent with, or hostile to, the doctrines of Christianity, on which alone rests our hope for humanity, it becomes us to look kindly upon all attempts to apply these doctrines to the details of human life, to the social, political, and industrial relations of the race."

—JOHN G. WHITTIER, *Prose Works*. Vol. III., page 208.

"Christianity is, in its nature, a missionary religion, converting, aggressive, advancing, encompassing the world."

—MAX MULLER.

"Religion should be to every man not merely a creed, but an experience; not a restraint, but an inspiration; not an insurance for the next world, but a program for the present world."

—JAMES STALKER.

## I.

### The Gospel According to Christ.

**TEXT**—"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."—Matt. 9: 35, 36.

There has been but one Christ. He has had followers and imitators, but never a peer, never a parallel. He has had His interpreters; Paul was an interpreter of Christ, but not a perfect one; John was an interpreter of Christ, but not a perfect one; James was an interpreter of Christ, but not a perfect one. It would take a Christ to interpret Christ perfectly.

It is entirely proper to speak of the Christianity of Paul, by which we mean the Gospel of Christ according to Paul. It is proper to speak of the Christianity of Augustine, of Luther, of Wesley, by which we mean the Gospel of Christ as interpreted by these. In a wider sense, Christianity has received other interpretations, so that we have a Christianity of Art, a Christianity of Philosophy, a Christianity of Creeds, and a Christianity of Civilization.

But above all there is a Christianity of Christ,—the Gospel as interpreted by the Master Himself. I go to a Book in which we read the record of His life, in which we have a report of His words, and

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select these verses as a text because they seem to me to illustrate some of the very first features of the Gospel He taught.

We are not through studying the Gospel according to Paul, we have much to learn yet from Peter, and John, and James, and some things from Augustine, and Luther, and Wesley, but we have most of all to learn from Christ. It is a hopeful thing that modern thought, while dwelling none the less upon the great doctrinal and theological interpretations of Christianity, is turning with passionate devotion to the words of Christ as the supreme authority in religion. "Back to Christ" is the word that passes along the line. We have read much, and studied long, about Christ; now let us read Him and study Him, and see if we may not in His light learn how human is the heart of God, how divine may be the life of man.

What a perfect picture we have here of the Son of Man,—He is busy, He is benevolent, He is pitiful, He is cosmopolitan. Oh, to have sat in the synagogue in which He taught! Oh, to have heard from His lips about the kingdom! Oh, to have seen Him healing the sick, to have been healed by Him! Oh, to have seen His eyes melt with compassion as He looked at the weary shepherdless flock that followed Him!—that were worth living for. But Jesus is no more in Galilee. Nazareth and Bethany are but green fringes on the dark horizon of a distant yesterday. If we would see and hear Him to-day we must study His life as it is reflected on the pages of this Book, whose words were writ-

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ten while yet the fragrance of His memory was fresh about the thousand scenes which had been sanctified by His presence.

We are talking much about a book called "What would Jesus do?" How can we know what He would do, until we know what He did do? What did He do? He went about teaching, preaching, pitying, healing; this, in short, is His biography. And what did His disciples do? They followed Him. Then when He had been with them a little while, He went away, saying, "I have showed you what ye ought to do; continue what I have begun; I commit to you the extension of my kingdom. What I have committed to you, do you commit to others, until the Kingdom of God has come in all the world." The Kingdom of God has not yet fully come, but it is nearer than it was yesterday, and it will be nearer to-morrow than it is to-day. It will be a great deal nearer to-morrow if we learn to-day the true nature of the kingdom, if we learn from Christ Himself, what kind of a Gospel He would have us convey to the world.

If I read aright His Gospel, it is, in the first place, a social Gospel. I might call it an altruistic Gospel as distinguished from an egoistic Gospel. By a social Gospel, I mean one which touches us in our relation to other human beings. The curse of the world from the beginning has been selfishness. The first heresy, the last heresy, the chief heresy, which excludes us from the kingdom of God, is that which inquires "Am I my brother's keeper?" It is the ancient heresy of Cain, the modern heresy of

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the man who seeks his own good without regard to the good of his neighbour. Jesus smote that heresy, and laid down a law which crosses it at every point,—“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

The fact is that Christ had so much to say about our relation to our brother and our neighbor, that the right understanding of that relation seems to lie at the very threshold of the kingdom of God. One puts it in this light: “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” And if we say, “Who is our brother?” Christ points him out to us. The most of us are willing to acknowledge the brotherhood of kinship, but there is a wider brotherhood than that. See it in the parable of the good Samaritan,—it is the brotherhood of need, and our hearts are not right until we acknowledge it.

Christianity in the beginning was pre-eminently a social movement. The early Christians acknowledged the brotherhood of faith; the Christian free-man called the Christian slave “brother.” When Paul sent the runaway slave, Onesimus, back to his master, Philemon, he said, “I return him to thee no longer as a bondman, but above a bondman, a brother beloved.” The Church acknowledged the brotherhood of poverty. Collections were taken in all the churches for the suffering saints at Jerusalem. They acknowledged the brotherhood of persecution. They prayed for “the saints scattered abroad,” who had been despoiled of their goods and banished from their homes. They acknowledged

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the brotherhood of humanity. They preached the Gospel to all nations, Greek and Roman, Carthaginian and Alexandrian, Egyptian and Abyssinian, Briton and Gaul. Was that not a social movement, which gave to every man a message to his brother, which laid upon the strong the burdens of the weak, and made the weal of each the care of all? This is why a rational socialism has its best basis in the New Testament. This is why Christ has been at the source of every significant social movement of the last eighteen hundred years.

Democracy is a social doctrine. Where did genuine democracy get its warrant? Consider: when Christ was born, the most august figure on earth was the Emperor; he was the only figure, for he was the State, and the State was all. But what a change the world has seen! There has been an evolution of the democrat, the common man. The common man is the most imperial figure on earth to-day. Nor do we find him first at Lexington, or Marston Moor, or Runnymede. He began to grow in the Christian church in apostolic times. He was a slave, he was the lowest of the low in the social scale, but Christianity had made a man of him and he began to see things in a new light. The dust of the wayside was still in his eyes, and the marks of the shackles were still red on his wrists, but he had in him the prophecy of all social revolution, political regeneration, and moral uplift.

Then the Gospel according to Christ is a compassionate Gospel. How often we read of Christ's compassion. He never looked upon a multitude

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without compassion. There is something exquisitely tender in this text, "When He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion on them because they were tired." (So the margin reads.) That is just like Jesus. It is not at all like the great ones of the world in His day. There is Horace, "the grand old Roman gentleman," beginning one of his odes with these words: "I hate the vulgar crowd and keep them at a distance." There is much of that spirit in the world to-day, but we are gradually coming to look at "the vulgar crowd" through the eyes of Jesus Christ, to see them as He saw them, and plan for their improvement.

Walter Wyckoff, a college graduate and Christian student of sociology, with gifted mind and comfortable prospects, dons his overalls and goes to work as an unskilled day laborer, in the ditch, in the harvest field, in the lumber camp, in the factory, to find out how men of that class live. He gives us some pathetic pictures of the multitude. One winter night in Chicago he saw two children busy on the street curb and drew near to find out what they were doing. They were at work about a barrel. It was full of refuse from an eating-house. "Scraps of meat and half eaten fragments of bread and of vegetables made up the contents; an old basket rested between the children and into it they dropped selected articles of food. The older girl was dressed in thin, ragged cotton, and her matted, stringy hair fell from her uncovered head about her peaked face. She wore shoes and stockings, but the shoes were too large for her and

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had great holes in them. The younger child was a girl of four. The snow fell on her clinging threadbare dress through which could be traced the delicate outlines of an infant's form. Through the dirt on her hand appeared the dimpled knuckles, and the fingers, red and cold and clean at their tips from the melting snow, had in them all the sweetness of a baby's waxen touch. A hoarse deep cough shook her little frame." Mr. Wyckoff asked the older child, "What are you going to do with this?" She clasped the basket with her hands and half hid it with her little body. "Don't you touch it, it is mine, I found it." He reassured her, and as the basket was full, helped her back to her home by carrying the younger one in his arms. The little one after the first moment of surprise, lay soft and warm against him, knowing too rarely the luxury of anything like love. "We have got something to eat, mother," cried the older one, "the barrel was full to-night." Who can see such a picture as that without compassion? Yet the world is full of just such things,—wives with drunken worthless husbands, sewing their eyes blind to keep body and soul in precarious partnership; mothers scrubbing their lives out to feed their children; "children crucified between the twin thieves Ignorance and Crime, while devils cast lots for the seamless garments of their souls." Into a world like this Christ came with a compassionate Gospel. Every man with the drink devil at his throat, or the poverty devil dragging him down, every struggling woman and every frail babe, every Hindoo child-

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widow, and every famine orphan, was in His thought when He said to His disciples and to us, "Whatsoever ye do unto one of the least of these, ye do it unto me."

The compassion of Christ is responsible for the major part of what has been done to make the condition of working men tolerable. Do you know that so late as the first quarter of the present century, women and children employed in factories were compelled to go to work at four o'clock in the morning and work till seven at night? It has taken us a long time to learn compassion, but we are learning it. The compassion of Christ is at the heart of the modern missionary movement. Not for the vain glory of the Church, nor for the gratification of desire for moral conquest, do our brothers go to far-off lands. Unspeakable pity for heathen souls who know nothing of the comfort of the Gospel and its attendant blessings moves them to their labor. When Livingstone died upon his knees in Africa, think you he was praying for himself? No, but for the people of Africa, whom he called his poor black sheep. So, also, with Chinese Gordon, the Bayard of modern England, the knight without fear and without reproach. Like Paul, who was willing to be lost, if thereby his brothers might be saved, Gordon prayed in the Soudan, "Curse me, O God, curse me, but spare these poor blacks." In all such workers, the heart of Christ has found an earthly tabernacle.

A social Gospel, a compassionate Gospel, an inclusive Gospel. You have heard of the church

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which was spoken of as "the most aristocratic and exclusive church in the city." Someone remarks, "It might be interesting to inquire who are excluded." Christ was the most inclusive character the world ever saw. He lived among Jews, and the Jews despised the Gentiles, but He included the Gentiles in His love; the Jews abhorred the Samaritans, but He included the Samaritans in His promises; the Jews hated the Romans, but He included them in the offer of grace. Whom did He exclude? Not one. To those who fancied they were the elect, and the only elect, He said, "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold." His last commission contemplated a world-wide movement, "Go ye and teach all nations." Mr. John R. Mott significantly remarks: "To get at the meaning of that commandment we have but to ask three questions; does 'go' mean stay? does 'ye' mean us? does the term 'all nations' mean all, or just our own?"

But there is a phase of the inclusiveness of the Gospel which concerns us as individuals. It is the "whosoever will" of the invitations of Jesus. Whosoever will, whosoever is athirst, whosoever heareth, whosoever is weary and heavy laden,—sublime inclusiveness! The election is on our side, not on His. The poor man, the unlearned man, the social outcast, the homeless one, the Hottentot, the red savage, all come within that "whatsoever." If any man is excluded from the kingdom of grace here or the kingdom of glory yonder, it is because he has excluded himself. The promise is as wide as humanity, as deep as sin, as high as heaven, and as

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true as the oath of God. If any man sin we have an Advocate. If any man will do God's will, he shall know the truth.

“He is a path if any be misled,  
He is a robe if any naked be ;  
If any chance to hunger, He is bread ;  
If any be a bondman, He is free.”

The New Birth and the New Life.

“The older I grow, the more I feel how essential is religion to give man the energy and love of goodness which he needs. I am convinced that without it, without the continual help of God, man can never succeed in wiping out the original stain which defiles his nature, nor attain to the holiness and purity which ought to be in him who would worship God in spirit and in truth.”

—*Guizot's Private Life*. By his Daughter. Page 16.

“The advent of Christ as the accredited representative of the Infinite makes unmistakable the august significance of life. The movement of mankind remains wild and terrible, but a purpose is seen subduing it. The path of progress is still an agony and a bloody sweat, but there is no waste; every ounce of pain, every hour of darkness, is made to contribute to the mighty advance, serves to bring out the glory of the receding goal, and is converted into richer and vaster being on the way.”

—GEORGE A. GORDON. *The Christ of To-day*. Page 233.

“In the perspective of eternity all lives will seem poor, and small, and lost, and self-condemned, beside a life for Christ.”

—HENRY DRUMMOND.

“Men must pass from old to new,  
From vain to real, from mistake to fact,  
From what once seemed good to what now proves best.”

—BROWNING. *Death in the Desert*.

## II.

### The New Birth and the New Life.

**TEXT**—"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, 'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.' Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'—John 3: 1-3.

It seems to be understood among some people that Jesus attracted to Himself only the poor, the homeless, and the abandoned. That is far from the historic truth. It is true, He did draw such unto Him, for, having no other help, they were ready to accept any man as their master who could feed and heal them; and having less to leave, they were the readier to leave all and follow Him.

But Jesus was a cosmopolitan. His personality was so winsome, His character so strong, His influence so pervasive, that all classes of people were interested in Him, the rich as well as the poor, the titled as well as the obscure. He had friends among the well-to-do. He was entertained by people in comfortable circumstances. He received distinguished callers.

The text speaks of one of His noblest visitors. He was a ruler of the Jews; that is, he was a member of the Sanhedrim, the Supreme Court of the Hebrews, of which no man could be a member except he was wealthy, learned, experienced, perfect

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in all his faculties, and trained in the construction and application of law. Such a man was Nicodemus, a Master in Israel, and a man of note. Lawyer-like, he was of an inquiring mind, and student-like, he was anxious to know the truth.

It is generally accounted against him that he came to Jesus by night. He is twice referred to parenthetically as "the same that came to Jesus by night." That may be however only by way of more definite description. Possibly he came by night in order to avoid criticism, for, being a Pharisee, there were religious prejudices to overcome, and being a ruler of the Jews, there were social impediments. And yet it is by no means certain that he was not influenced by other considerations. Possibly Jesus himself had appointed a night hour for the interview. Students generally favor the night time for serious and continuous thought. The noises of the day distract the mind. Then we must remember that such was the press of the crowd that followed the Savior, that there could be no such thing as an uninterrupted interview during the day. Why, he had to go apart into a mountain to pray. Again, He went into a ship to escape the throng, but crossing the lake, He found a crowd had assembled on the shore to meet Him when He arrived. Moreover, it is possible the official duties of Nicodemus—Counsellor and Judge as he was—forbade his coming except after the busy hours. At any rate Jesus did not reprove him for timidity, weak expediency, or cowardice. Why should we accuse him?

## The New Birth and the New Life

Even if fear of criticism led him to come by night, let us remember that he came, and for what purpose he came. He was not merely curious, as was Zaccheus. He did not endeavor to entrap Jesus as did some. He came to inquire, to learn, to sit at the Master's feet as a humble scholar, willing and waiting to be led into truth. He came by night, but it took courage to come at all. And it took humility for a learned lawyer to seek instruction of a young Galilean carpenter who had no standing among scholars, or degree from the schools. Yes he came, and in his very first sentence acknowledged the eminence of Jesus. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God."

This much is to be said in favor of Nicodemus. And something may be said in favor of the Pharisees, the ecclesiastical party to which he belonged. With all their self-righteousness and narrowness and bigotry, they still preserved a salt of genuine patriotism and genuine godliness, and produced some high-toned and cultivated men, such as Gamaliel. And conservatives as they were, they had the virtue of enthusiasm, which is commendable. Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee, and the zeal with which at first he persecuted the Christians was carried over into his apostleship to the enrichment of the world.

But it is not so much the Pharisees as Nicodemus in whom we are interested. What did Jesus say to him, and how did he receive it? What He said is written in the third chapter of John,—that great chapter which contains more of interest to us than

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all the other writings of antiquity put together; contains one verse which outweighs a ton of speculation: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thank God for these words. And thank God for Nicodemus, for had he not come to Christ, it may be these words had never been spoken. That verse is a world-message. It was addressed to Nicodemus, but it appeals to all men, everywhere, assuring us that we are not the offspring of an orphaned universe, but that there is a great Heart at the centre of things. That is what men want to know—whether this world is governed by blind chance, or un pitying fate, or by Loving Intelligence. This is one of the greatest sayings of Jesus. And yet it was spoken to an audience of one man. That was characteristic of the Savior,—He never waited for large audiences; He gave His best to such as were willing to hear Him, whether twelve, or three, or one. Indeed as between a mob of curiosity-mongers and one earnest, serious, impressionable soul, He turned from the mob and taught the one.

It is related of an old Greek philosopher that he noticed on one occasion that all of his hearers save one had left him in the midst of his discourse; but he continued to speak, seeing it was Plato who remained. He said "Plato alone is a sufficient audience for me." There was that in Plato which called for his best thought. There was that in Nicodemus which called for Jesus' best thought, His sublimest truth. Indeed, there was that in any

## The New Birth and the New Life.

human soul that ever came within the circle of His ministry which called for His best thought. He knew the value of a soul, and the power of a single life sanctified by truth. So, aside from the Sermon on the Mount, his two profoundest discourses were delivered to single individuals. There was the woman of Samaria He met at the well. Unlike Nicodemus, she was unlearned, and of polluted reputation, but to her Jesus opened the deep things of the kingdom. What a lesson for preachers, and teachers, and disciples of Christ generally. The Master took care to instruct even one; He did not ask that the one be great, or noble, or influential. All He asked was the attentive ear. He knew that men are to be saved one by one, and not in masses. The Church will do better work when it ceases to discuss the question "How to reach the masses" and sets to work to reach the individuals of whom the masses are composed.

The very first thing that Jesus said to Nicodemus touched the deepest principle of the new faith: "Ye must be born again." It was a dark saying to the Pharisee, "Master in Israel" as he was. He began to ask questions. He wanted to know the meaning of the metaphor—for metaphor it is, "the second birth." "How can a man be born when he is old?" He wanted to know the science of salvation. Science always asks "How?" But Jesus does not offer to explain how. He simply points to a corresponding mystery in nature, and reaffirms the necessity of the second birth: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the

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sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." All of which amounts substantially to this: we are not to deny results because we can not understand processes. There are mysterious operations in nature as in grace. Our knowledge is limited by the dullness of our senses and by the slowness of our minds. We do not know the whence or whither of the wind. We only know it bloweth where it listeth. We do not know the mystery of the first birth,—why stumble over the mystery of the second? The world is full of just such mysteries—vegetable growth, animal evolution, human biogenesis. All life is a miracle in the sense that its origin is superhuman. A chemist can make a grain of corn, resembling in every respect a natural grain, in shape, size, color, and ratio of ingredients. He plants it in the earth and waits for it to grow. He may wait till doomsday but it will never grow. It lacks life. But plant the other grain, the one from nature's laboratory. The earth will nourish it, and the dew will moisten it, and the sun will warm it, and the invisible forces of the air will minister to it, until it comes to a ripened ear, and reproduces itself a hundred-fold. This is the miracle of life, of life in the lowest order. But whether here or in the highest, its secret defies analysis. This is what Jesus said to this man: the second birth is a mystery. And he affirmed that it is a necessity as well. "Except ye be born of water and of the Spirit ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

## The New Birth and the New Life.

Nicodemus knew what it was to be born of water; he had probably been baptized by John. Jesus knew that, and simply said, "Baptism is not enough." John himself said as much: "I indeed baptize you with water: but there standeth One among you whom ye know not. He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose." We may rid ourselves of any mystery attaching to the expression "born of water." The mystery attaches to the other words "born again," "born of the Spirit," or "born from above" as we read in the margin.

And that need not trouble us if we remember that the only way to get into any kingdom of life is to be born into it. A plant is born into the vegetable kingdom. An animal is born into the animal kingdom. Man, the highest type of animal, is born into the human kingdom, and a Christian, the highest type of man, is born into the Kingdom of God. The beginning of the Christian life in the soul is a birth. Scripture is consistent with itself, everywhere representing the process by which a man becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God as a radical change. It is a quickening, a renewing, a putting off of the old man and putting on the new, a passing from death to life, a new creation. By these terms we understand there is an experience in which a soul is so acted upon by something not itself as to be alive to a sphere which did not exist for it before. That power is the Holy Ghost, and that sphere the whole spiritual universe.

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There are people who are utterly dead to music. They were never alive to it. Harmony, melody, concord of sweet sounds, they know nothing about. There are people who are utterly dead to poetry. They were never alive to it. They never read it; they fall asleep, or yawn, or look stupid, if you read it to them. Now if some great musical genius could just touch the heart of that man who is dead to music, and awaken him to a world of melody and a wealth of song; or if some great poetic genius could only touch the heart of the man who is dead to poetry and quicken him to a sense of the sweetness and power of poetry, that would be a regeneration, a birth "from above." What no man can do for the unmusical, or for the unpoetical, the Holy Ghost does for the unspiritual, touching the heart and henceforth inclining it to God; imparting new impulses, new desires, new affections, new purposes, new passions; so affecting a man like Paul that the passion of his life becomes so divine that he could say "For to me to live is Christ." Paul could not always say that. Once he would have said "For to me to live is Saul." But that was before he was born again. And afterwards he lived in such a different world that he changed his name. That was so of David Mendel, the German Jew. When he was born again he said "Henceforth I shall bear a Christian name; let it be Neander, 'new man'." It was so of Augustine, to whom an old companion in sin called when he started to run away on her approach, "Do not run away, it is I," and he replied "I am running because it is no longer I."

## The New Birth and the New Life.

This is the new life in Christ Jesus—to loathe the sins we loved, to love the burdens that we loathed: “Hereby we know that we know Him; if we keep His commandments.” To seek new friendships: “We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brotherhood.” To aspire to do something for the love of Christ. To feel old habits loosening their fetters, and new habits growing like leaves in the spring-time. It is the spring-time of the soul; the winter has passed away and the singing of birds has come. New loves, new ideals, new aspirations; these are the flowers of the new life in the soul. They are beautiful, but then there is something better than flowers; it is fruit. So, new activities are the fruit of the new life.

Victor Hugo preached a great sermon when he said: “To live is to have justice, truth, reason, devotion, probity, sincerity, right, and duty welded into the heart. To live is to know what one is worth, what one can do and should do. Life is conscience.” So the new birth is the entrance to a new conception of life. It is a revelation of what life really means.

It was an old man who had long survived his period of activity who said, “I am dead. I have been dead ten years, but I don’t tell anybody.” Well, it is something for a man to know he is dead. There are a good many people who never have begun to live and do not know it.

Some years ago there was a man in Buffalo who lived for self and pleasure and gain. He prospered

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for a time. He built a great house on Delaware Avenue. Then he failed and lost all he had lived for. He drifted to a Western city, where, like the prodigal in the far country, he came near perishing with hunger. He sank very low. He even descended to beg little sums from his old friends with which to buy drinks or secure lodgings for the night. He came, by chance, or by some good Providence, within the influence of a Christian Church, and gave God a chance to save him, and He did save him wonderfully. And now he is living a new life. He is not rich as he once was. He does not live in a mansion like that he built on the Avenue, but he says he would not exchange places with the man he was twenty-five years ago with the wealth of the whole city thrown in. He is immeasurably happier since he began to live to God.

You know the story of Helen Kellar, who lives in the world of sense chiefly through her fingertips. What a revelation it would be to her if the Christ should come and touch her eyes and say, "Daughter, receive thy sight," and touch her ears and say, "Daughter, hear." Yet that would not mean so much as it does to a man when he begins to live to God. New visions, new voices, new destinies, appeal to him, and he says "This is life; I never knew its greatness before."

A gentleman applied to me some days ago for a copy of Dr. Milburn's lecture on "What a Blind Man Saw in England." He wanted it for a friend of his who is blind, and who wants to know how a

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blind man may get the most out of life, how he may live to this world in the largest circle. Oh, that men were as anxious to live to God; to see and hear what he reveals to the inner man. Oh, that men were as anxious to enter into the joys of the spirit as into the pleasures of sense. This is the office of the Holy Ghost, to awaken in men a desire to live.

"I slept and dreamed that life is beauty;  
I waked and found that life is duty."

Is life, therefore, not beautiful? It is, when we live on the right side of it; when we see it from the viewpoint of the Kingdom of God. Then everything but sin becomes beautiful. Duty is beautiful—hard, strict, stern, rugged duty; sorrow is beautiful "clearing the atmosphere and cooling the fever of our restlessness;" earth is beautiful, "full of the riches of God's glory;" humanity is beautiful because all men have been redeemed; heaven is beautiful with its bounty and its permanence; and even Death is beautiful, the black servant who disrobes us of our garments of flesh and conducts us to the throne room of the King. This is the Gospel of the New Life. It is what Jesus taught Nicodemus, and from that room the ruler went out into the darkness of the night, but into the dawning light of a better life. A little later we find him lifting up his voice in the Sanhedrim against the condemnation of Jesus; and a little later we find him at the Cross assisting Joseph of Arimathea to give the body of Jesus burial; no longer a secret believer, but a confessor of Jesus Christ, a friend of the disciples. Life was never the same after

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that night-time conference. Life is never the same to any man who lets Jesus Christ touch him and teach him. It has a new center and a new horizon. Old things pass away and all things become new. He may not speak for Jesus in a Jewish Sanhedrim, or wrap His body in a linen shroud; but he will speak for Him before the tribunal of a thoughtless world, and he will give Him the guest chamber of his heart.

The Everlasting Miracle.

“Talk about evidences of divine power!—the religion that can take a man from the lowest stratum of society, and make him right and keep him right, needs no further evidence. It carries its own light.”

—STOWELL BROWN.

“There is not a weakness that cannot be made a strength; there is not a poverty that cannot be made a wealth; there is not a hindrance that cannot be made an inspiration. God takes our very vices, and out of them makes radiance and light and warmth-giving.”

—LYMAN ABBOTT.

“What live we for but this ?—

Into the world to breathe the soul of sweetness;  
The stunted growth to rear to fair completeness;  
Drown sneers in smiles, kill hatred with a kiss,  
And to the sandy waste bequeath the fame  
That flowers bloomed behind us whence we came.”

—JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

### III.

## The Everlasting Miracle.

**TEXT**—"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."—Isaiah 55: 13.

The office of the Hebrew prophet was to teach. This is one of the primary meanings of the word "prophecy"—to teach. Isaiah was a teacher. And he was more. He was a seer of visions and a dreamer of dreams. As a teacher, he dealt practically with the emergencies of the present. But as a seer, the limits of time did not exist for him. Periods of time vanished before his gaze. The near and future were alike to him. His lofty faith spanned the stream of years that flows between the now and the then. It is because of this that some of his visions are confusing to the desultory reader. Sometimes, after presaging an event in the almost imminent future, he predicts an event in far-off ages. Thus, in the tenth chapter, he sees deliverance from the power of Assyria (a thing which was to be accomplished almost immediately); and apparently without a change of perspective, a moment later, in the eleventh chapter, he sees the coming Messiah set up His kingdom. He describes Him: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse." He describes the kingdom, as to its character, thus: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,

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and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

Much of the book of Isaiah is full of warnings and visions that have no interest to us, except as mere historic facts. But they are not easily dis-severed from certain other visions on whose fulfillment rest the chief doctrines of the Gospel of Christ. The Messianic element in the visions of Isaiah is very strong.

He predicts a virgin-birth; describes the child of this birth by titles that sound blasphemous if applied to any other than Christ. He pictures "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." He foresees an entirely new way of inheriting eternal life: the old way was to keep the law and live; the new way puts life first,—have eternal life within you, and keep the law. Moreover he anticipates a spiritual worship in bold contrast with the ceremonialism of his day.

As a German commentator says, "The lofty spirit of Isaiah took a corresponding form. We see in him a master of the Hebrew tongue." He used a royal language royally. All forms of rhetoric were at his command. Hence the charm of his discourse and the beauty of his poetry. For he was a poet. He was a poet of national life. He had a broad and far-sighted view of political movements and social tendencies.

He was a poet of religious life. He had that clear knowledge of spiritual truth, and that corresponding experience of intimate fellowship with

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God, which, with felicitous expression, constitutes a great religious poet, such as Charles Wesley, Isaac Watts, Horatius Bonar, or Frances Ridley Havergal.

Then he was a poet of nature. He had that love of the beautiful and sense of the sublime in nature which made Wordsworth the interpreter of "the Gospel in flowers and stars and winds and sea." His favorite mode of expression was to use some one of nature's various forms to illustrate his statement of truth by analogy, or to make plain the ways of God to man. It is when he employs this method that he reaches his loftiest flights. Is it not the excellence of the twenty-third Psalm that the singer borrows the splendor of his language from fair fresh forms of nature, such as green pastures, still waters, and shadowy vales? The thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah is generally considered his finest sustained flight, and it is full of images taken from nature: "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. In the wilderness shall water break forth, and streams in the desert."

The text is equally beautiful: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree." The prophet of God saw a redeemed world. He saw in this vision the sequel of that song,

"No more let sin and sorrow grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found."

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A redeemed world is only a restored world, the world as it was before the fall. There were no thorns and briars in Eden when man was innocent. It was because sin entered that the ground was cursed. "Cursed be the ground for thy sake," was a part of the penalty of sin. This representation of the earth as the fellow convict and fellow sufferer of guilty man I take not to be entirely figurative. Yet the force of the thought may be chiefly by association. Our garden is never the same after we have sinned. The very flowers become noxious weeds.

Do you not know how, by association, a pleasurable object may become painful, without any material change in its character? A great English writer tells us how he was shut up in a chamber of death when a little child, for a little time. The window was open and the breezes brought to his senses the odor of the blooming clover meadows. And he says, so deep and keen was his grief, so violent his fear of close contact with death, that ever afterward the odor of blooming meadows, so delightful to others, was agony to him. It always seemed that winds which brought such fragrance came out of charnel houses.

George D. Prentice, when a little boy, saw a playmate, a little girl, drop dead at his side during a summer storm, stricken by a bolt of lightning. And he said that even in his manhood, he trembled and cowered in a thunderstorm.

More forcible still may be this illustration: A child, during the absence of his mother from home,

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rummaging among the drawers, finds a purse, and tempted by his appetite, takes a coin from it, and spends it for some childish sweet. The mother comes home, and at evening sends the boy to bed, unforgiven, because undetected and unconfessed. That night he has his first experience with "thorns in the pillow." Does any one of you not know what that means? What is the trouble with the pillow? You cannot rest comfortably however you arrange it. It is not Caesar's crown that makes him lie uneasy, it is his conscience. Sin has cursed the pillow for his sake.

In that sense the earth is cursed. The Scriptures speak as if the whole animal creation were involved in the fall; as if evil passions reign in their untutored breasts which were not originally implanted there. All this impresses us that the lapse of the human race was an event of tremendous significance; that it was no mere error in judgment, or impropriety; that it was vastly more than a mere lack of culture; that it was an awful violence to the order of the universe, and that, as a result, "all the foundations of the world are out of course."

Now the first advent of Christ marked the beginning, as the second advent is to mark the consummation of a plan by which all things are to be restored as they were in Eden, before the serpent had left his trail there. There shall be a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. He that sits upon the throne is making all things new. His purposes look to the establishment of a "statelier Eden" for man, a statelier man for Eden,—man as

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he was when first he walked out from the perfect thought of God with the image of his Maker fresh upon him.

This is the vision of Isaiah—gardens without weeds, fields without thorns, hedges without briars, a world without sin. This is the hope of the Gospel. This is the aim of the Church. Can we cherish such a hope? Can we believe such a prophecy? God does not ask us to believe it without a sign. He has given us a token, a pledge, a sign that shall never be cut off. There are in human nature, by the grace of God, in individual instances, the very changes which if made universal, would accomplish the complete transformation of society. They are described in the text: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree."

The thorn and briar are fit figures of certain qualities of character. The fir tree and the myrtle are representative of certain other qualities of character. So instead of certain types of character shall appear others very different, indeed quite opposite.

You can cultivate a thorn tree, until its thorns are sharper and smother. You can even graft a thorn and make it something better than it is in its wild state. You can cultivate a briar and make it more comely and vigorous, but you can never make it anything better than a briar. There is an impassable gulf between the thorn and the fir tree, between the briar and the myrtle; the former are

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deciduous, they shed their leaves in the Autumn; the latter are evergreen, and no process of cultivation or engrafting can change a deciduous tree into an evergreen.

So, the change here described is nothing short of a miracle. Such a change we see when cruelty gives place to tenderness, when stinging hatred becomes devoted love, a miracle in a materialistic age, "a name unto the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

Who says the days of miracles are ended? The history of the Christian religion is full of them. We do not have to go far to discover notable examples of the power of God so to transform human character that when we see what has been done, we say, "Instead of the thorn has come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree."

This is what occurs when a man ceases to be vindictive and revengeful, and becomes forgiving. It is what occurred to a man I know of, whose own brother has often told me the story. He was a ship carpenter, and he had had a quarrel with his foreman. He had come to hate him, to hate him with a hatred out of which murder is born. He found himself, unconsciously almost, meditating all kinds of vengeance. If thoughts had been daggers his enemy had been wounded worse than Caesar was with Brutus' and Casca's blades. He remembered what the Bible says of feeding an enemy and giving him to drink, and so heaping coals of fire on his head, and thought, "I would like to do that if it would burn his brains out." But something hap-

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pened one day to that ship carpenter. There came to him, by his own seeking, an experience that was nothing less than what the Scriptures call "the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," and things were changed. He said, when he next saw that foreman, he felt like pursuing a policy of conciliation without any reference to the burning process. He loved him. He declared his old enemy looked absolutely beautiful. "Instead of the thorn, the fir tree."

That is what occurs when a man ceases to be envious and becomes contented; when he ceases to be censorious and becomes charitable; when he ceases his rioting and drunkenness, and becomes sober; when a profane man becomes reverent, a thief honest, a liar truthful. It is a process of destruction and reconstruction. And it has its parallel in the natural world so commonly that it has ceased to be considered miraculous. One of the most sturdy men I know twenty years ago was a nervous dyspeptic. For years he never ate a morsel of food that did not distress him. But he had a fever, and it burned the dyspepsia out of him. It brought him down to eighty pounds; until there was not enough of him left to have the dyspepsia. Then he began to build a new body, and by careful attention to the laws of health, he came to a strength he had never known. Nature is not always so kind to us. But grace is. It offers to reconstruct us all, to give us a clean heart and a right spirit; to regenerate our character.

Do you know such cases? There are multitudes

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of them. I am thinking of one, a man who had the reputation of being the most profane man in his community. He was so profane that ordinarily profane men shuddered at his oaths. Like the fiends in hell whom Pollok describes, he

"Cursed Almighty God, and cursed the Lamb.  
And cursed the Resurrection morn."

And his temper,—he would fight at the least provocation. But he has been "created anew in Christ Jesus for an habitation of God through the Spirit." His language is reverent, his temper is subdued, he fights the good fight of faith, and his only fear is that sometime in the delirium of sickness, he may wander back into his wayward years, and be profane, and know it not. "Instead of the thorn the fir tree."

Go to the Church in Wesley's time, and you will find that this was the secret of the success of the Gospel in those days, instantaneous and revolutionary transformations of character. A story-telling cobbler used to draw audiences to an English chapel by the power of a pure Gospel, and simple, pointed, graphic speech. In the same town a boisterous and dissolute youth was accustomed to dispense liquor in an ale-house. One night he said, "Let's go down and hear old Cole tell his stories." The crowd went. The leader was converted, and the world has felt the power of such a man as George Whitefield. "Instead of the thorn the fir tree."

Long, long before, there was another. He was not dissolute. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. Cultured but intolerant. Learned, but bigoted.

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Devout, but merciless. On an errand of slaughter he started from Jerusalem to Damascus. He will crush out this Christian heresy. Not mothers' cries nor infants' wails shall stay his hand. But suddenly a light shines down upon the way, a voice is heard, and Saul of Tarsus, blinded and penitent, cries out "What wilt thou have me do?" Now I see him in the street called Straight, at the feet of a humble man of God, awaiting the laying on of hands that shall ordain him an "Apostle to the Gentiles," the chosen vessel of the Lord. That is a new creation. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." It is the new birth.

And this is the Gospel that is to work among the nations until "in the habitation of dragons shall be grass, with reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness." And up that way, with waxing strength, the ransomed sons of God shall walk to be with saints in light.

The Three Records.

"A youth thoughtless when the career of all his days depends on the opportunity of a moment! A youth thoughtless when all the happiness of the home for ever depends on the chances or the passions of an hour! A youth thoughtless when his every act is a foundation-stone of future conduct, and every imagination a fountain of life or death! Be thoughtless in any after years, rather than now; though, indeed, there is only one place where a man may be nobly thoughtless—his death-bed. No thinking should ever be left to be done there."

—RUSKIN.

"The awfulness of sin comes not wholly from the fact that it is a disobedience of God, but as well from the certainty that it is a doing of violence to the soul itself in the loss of power, the decay of love, the enfeebling of will, and the general atrophy of the nature. The thing affected by our indulgence is not alone the book of final judgment, but the present fabric of the spirit."

—HENRY DRUMMOND.

"There can be no blessedness without holiness, and there cannot be bliss where loyalty does not exist. Behind every planet there will be that shadow; and as surely as there can be no illumination on one side without shadow on the other, so surely a record of sin will cast a shadow forever, and some part of that shadow will sweep over the sea of glass, and not be invisible from the Great White Throne."

—JOSEPH COOK.

#### IV.

### The Three Records.

TEXT—"Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written."—John 19: 22.

The circumstances of the historic occasion on which these words were spoken need but a brief review. The greatest tragedy of the ages was about to be enacted. Pilate, timid and time-serving, had been touched to transient tenderness by the gentle demeanor of the mysterious Man before him. He had tried to release Jesus, and had sent Him to Herod to be judged as a Galilean, for Herod Antipas was tetrach of Galilee, and was then present in Jerusalem. Herod had sent Jesus back to Pilate, who endeavored again to calm the riotous demonstration, and, forced at last either to assert his power and forbid the crucifixion, or to give his passive consent, he had repudiated responsibility in the matter, but allowed the popular murder to proceed.

It was in unconcealed contempt for the Jews that Pilate said, "Behold your king!" And it was to punish them by reminding them that they had betrayed one of their own countrymen to Rome that he ordered the inscription on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." That all classes might be able to read it, he had the title written in the three languages then in use in Palestine,—the Hebrew of the native people, the Latin of the Roman conquerors, and the Greek of the Hellenic

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population. No arrangement of that inscription could have been more fitting, or more prophetic, than such a threefold one, suggesting to us the relation of the cross to various nations of the world, to the religious Hebrew, the imperial Roman, and the cultured Greek. The leaders of the Jews were offended that Jesus had been called their king; so they demanded a change in the inscription: "Say not he is king of the Jews, but that he said he was king of the Jews." But Pilate had already been forced by them to violate his own moral judgment, and so he dismissed them impatiently, absolutely refusing to alter the inscription, saying, (and I think he must have said it emphatically,) "What I have written, I have written."

I do not quote these words to rehearse the shameful story of that day; neither to hold up the character of Pilate to your scorn; but rather, to remind you that his words were truer than he knew,—what he had written was ineffaceable. Pilate had made a record which time could neither erase nor reverse, a record of moral weakness and infamy. The Man of Galilee was crucified that day, and presently lay in His new-hewn tomb, but Pilate has been pilloried ever since, and the sentiment of ages has inscribed him, "Pontius Pilate, by whose sanction our Saviour suffered: he had to choose between truth and expediency; being a coward he chose the latter, and sent Jesus to the cross."

In all that trial, in all his feeble attempts to save an innocent man from death and yet save himself from censure, Pilate was writing; he was writing

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his own record. The whole spirit of his life was revealed in that crisis. The question lay between the crucifixion of Christ and the crucifixion of self. The world knows his decision. When it had been made, he might have said of it, as of the sentence on the cross, "What I have written, I have written." The fact is, every man's life is a record determined by himself, into which enter thoughts, words, and deeds, each of which leaves its indelible mark. The sum of all these marks is character, of which when it is finished, each of us may say, "What I have written, I have written." The complete account of our lives is the sum of three records.

There is a record we keep of ourselves. It is graven on the imperishable tablet of memory. Not an act, not a syllable, not an imagining, is unrecorded. Mental philosophers doubt that a man can forget anything. It is true, there are times when we cannot recall what we have once known; but experience teaches us that what we cannot remember under some circumstances is perfectly remembered under others. We all know how a face, a name, a strain of music, or even a faint odor, can resurrect the dead past, and compel us to live over again the scenes of long ago. It seems as if all the machinery of memory may be put into operation by touching a single mysterious key.

You have seen a phonograph. You know that the sounds are received and preserved on a sensitive cylinder. Look at that cylinder upon which some speaker has breathed articulate words: you see noth-

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ing but a few delicate and apparently uniform lines. It is the record of speech. Keep the cylinder a year, and then put it into the phonograph again,—it will yield you every sound; keep it a thousand years and it is the same. Generations may be born and die; nations may rise and decay; but the accents of that human voice, the slight lisp, the momentary hesitation, the suppressed laughter, the tremulous pathetic quality, all will be the same. Of course, as the cylinder is so delicate, it is likely to be destroyed, and if it is, the record perishes. Man's spirit is such an instrument, only it is indestructible. Do you imagine that the machine I have described is less wonderful than the man's mind who invented it? Ah, that is what makes man so great—his immortality. Men who have faced death, who have been rescued from drowning after death had hold on them, tell us with very general agreement that all the past has risen before them like a flashing panorama, nothing omitted, things they had not thought of for years as plainly seen as though they had just been written. What a prophecy of judgment! When the full light of conscience falls on memory all the past is revealed.

Not all of us have had the experience of death so imminent, it may be. But if you doubt there is such a possibility in memory, be reminded that sometimes a face, a form, a word, will startle us by the vivid representation of events which we might have supposed were safe in the keeping of forgetfulness. There was a man, who during his college days, before his conversion, was guilty of a dreadful

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sin, involving the virtue and character of a woman. As years went by, her name and face disappeared from his memory and he accounted those early chapters of his wild career all covered by subsequent penitence and reformation. He had become a minister and stood in an honored pulpit, a sincere and successful advocate of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But one day, as he was preaching, the vision of a woman's face in the congregation started a train of memory, which led him so irresistibly and suddenly to review that special sin, that he was overcome with confusion in the midst of his discourse, and was forced to bring his sermon to a sudden end.

The ancients had a fable of a river by bathing in which the memory of the unpleasant past might be washed away. Fain would we find its pleasant waters; but earth has no such stream. "What I have written, I have written."

We are not only writing on the tablet of our own memory, but we are making a record on the fadeless pages of others' minds. I do not now refer to the unconscious influence of our deeds upon others, but to the fact that they are taking note of us, and writing down indelibly their impressions. If we only knew this fact in its relation to our own welfare, and to that of those who keep the register, we would be more properly solicitous about our conduct, and the judgment of our fellow men as to its character.

There is a slavish fear and a slavish pride, which lead us sometimes to be over anxious to impress

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others favorably; there is also a proper solicitude as to the record we establish in the estimation of others. The former binds us, as Pilate was bound, to consult policy rather than principle; the latter constrains us to be careful in our deportment. Others may err in their opinions. Their record may contain mistakes, because their sphere of observation may be small and their angle of vision may be unfavorable to correct perspective. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the world keeps a tolerably accurate record of our lives. If a man is self-seeking, if he is shallow, or censorious, or self-righteous, the world is not often deceived. There are men in every congregation, young men too, who would be amazed beyond expression if they only knew the record they have been leaving in the minds of others. If you say, "Let others look at their own record," you are not wise, for the record they are keeping of you is paralleled by the record you are keeping of them. We write upon these pages unconsciously. No living man can escape, no living man ought to despise, this fact. There are some questions which men ask themselves, involuntarily, about us, and do not come to us for their answer in words; they inspect our lives; they put this word with that word we have spoken, this deed with that deed, this look with that gesture, this feature with that attitude; they scrutinize our gait; they mark our amusements, our habits of life, and then put down the Yes or No in answer to the questions: Is he a wise man or a fool? Is he trustworthy or unreliable? Is he virtuous or evil-

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minded? Does he do his duty or does he shirk? Is the community in which he lives better or worse for his presence? There are those in every community who are valuable to society locally and at large. There are others who could be spared with no loss. There are some whose removal would be a great loss to the community. There are those whose permanent removal would create a boom in real estate, a revival in the church, and rejoicing generally. Let not such think they have deceived their fellows as to their real worth or worthlessness. Society has set its mark upon them. What they have written, they have written.

Though our own record be a complete one, and that of others approximately true, the only absolutely just judgment of our lives is with God. He searcheth the hearts of men. He knows the secret motives of our best and worst deeds. We may deceive ourselves; we may succeed in deceiving others, but we cannot deceive God. He is not mocked. The Scriptures are full of such warnings as these: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written, according to their works." Oh, the books, the

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books! Our sins, our shame, our undiscovered crimes, the acts, which, if known to men, would ruin us, the dishonor, the theft, the impurity, the falsehood, the murder, it is all written down in the books. "What I have written, I have written."

These are our records. What is the lesson for us? What of the first record? Can we expunge what we have written? I answer, never. What? do we not sing of a past covered by the blood? Yes—the blood of Christ can heal the wound, but it can never remove the scar.

" Wounds of the soul, though healed will ache ;  
The reddening scars remain and make  
Confession ;  
Lost innocence returns no more :  
We are not what we were before  
Transgression."

Augustine was a redeemed man, but he was heard to say, in memory of his early wasted years, "Too late I loved Thee, O thou Beauty of Ancient Days, yet ever new!" John B. Gough was a redeemed man, but he was heard to say he would have given his right arm if he could blot out just one page from his past. Young men may imagine they have boundless opportunities to explore the deeps and shallows of sin without discovery, but let them know there will be days of gloom, and nights of terror, when, alone with memory, they are compelled to face the record they have written. There was a lad who went from the country to a great city, with the words of a mother's counsel fresh in his mind. There came to him one night, when he was far from home, an invitation to

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join a company of reckless fellows in spending an evening in questionable company. He was undecided whether to go. In that crisis of his life, there came to the deliverance of his beleaguered soul one sentence from his mother's blessed lips. It had been spoken long ago, but it seemed as if it had been spoken with reference to this very hour. It was this: "You may do in one brief moment a deed which will torment you to your grave." That sentence determined his course, and thenceforth, it was easier for him to "scorn delights and live laborious days." He kept his record clean.

Dr. Joseph Cummings, President of Northwestern University, dying, turned to one who stood beside him, and said, "My record—has it been a good one? It will be accepted will it not?" How natural that one whose whole life had been spent in teaching should spend his last breath in speaking about records. My brother, what of your record? Has it been a good one? Or are there pages you would cancel if you could? I would have you add a sentence to that record now. Let it appear that on this day you registered a vow to keep your record void of offense toward God and man.

"My soul, look not behind thee,  
Thou hast work to do at last;  
Let the brave toil of thy future  
Overarch the crumbling past;  
Build each great act high and higher,  
Build it on the conquered sod,  
Where thy weakness first fell bleeding,  
Where thy first prayer was to God."

What of the record we have left in the minds of others? The only way to treat it is to compel them

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to change their estimate by giving certain evidence of a changed life. The record of our errors will remain, but across it may be written some such sentence as this, "He is a changed man. He is not what he once was. He is a Christian now." Such a fact may be the basis of a new record. Upon the ruins of the past, by the help of God, a nobler temple may arise.

And what of God's record? I bring you good news. He promises to cover all our sins, to pardon, cleanse, restore, so that, though we may remember our own sins, and others may remember our sins, He before whose throne we shall appear for final judgment, will cast our sins into the sea of entire forgetfulness; so that, clad in white, we shall be as angels are, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. But remember, there is but one way to obtain pardon, and that is by accepting Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Saviour. It is not enough to accept Him as a good man, the best of men, or as a teacher sent from God, a sort of superior Socrates. He is not accepted at all if He is not accepted in the office of the Son of God, who came to seek and to save the lost. And remember too, we must not continue in sin that grace may abound. There is nothing that so hardens the heart, nothing that so contributes to make sincere repentance impossible as the voluntary continuance in sin, presuming upon the mercy of God. That is the fatal error of some who make the goodness of God an excuse for offenses against the moral law. Christ saves men, but only upon the condition that they cease from

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sinning, abhor sin, and abhor themselves for sinning.

Once more I warn you to be careful that you allow no unworthy act to stain your record. Stop before you execute the plan you are now meditating. Can you afford to let it be written on the precious page of a single hour? The memory of it will survive the momentary pleasure it may minister to your senses, and you must live with your memory forever. What is written is written, and this is written: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

"Life is a leaf of paper white,  
Whereon each one of us may write  
His word or two, and then comes night.

\* \* \* \* \*

Greatly begin! though thou have time  
But for a line, be that sublime—  
Not failure, but low aim, is crime."



Believing to See.

“Believe and trust. Through stars and suns,  
Through life and death, through soul and sense,  
His wise paternal purpose runs;  
The darkness of His providence  
Is star-lit with benign intents.”

—WHITTIER. *Revelation.*

“The great crises of life especially may become the links which bind us to something beyond this world. The thought of God and eternity is the resting-place in which we are left alone when our health fails, when our life draws to a close. Clouds which at times overshadow our path, extend but a little way from the earth which is our habitation; the love and light which are beyond are without limit.”

—BENJAMIN JOWETT. *College Sermons.* Pages 307, 308.

“He fought his doubts and gathered strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them; thus he came at length

“To find a stronger faith his own;  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

“But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai’s peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho’ the trumpet blew so loud.”

—TENNYSON. *In Memoriam.*

## V.

### Believing to See.

TEXT--"I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."—Psalm 27: 13.

Christ once spoke a parable to His disciples to this end, that men ought always to pray and not faint, in which sense we understand the word "faint" means "to grow weary." Paul assures us in his Epistle to the Galatians that in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Thus used, the word signifies "to relax, to lose energy, to cease effort." In the book of Proverbs we find this saying: "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small;" in which case we understand that to faint is to lose heart.

In the text there is no word in the original for the expression, "I had fainted." That is supplied by the translators. The Hebrew sentence is elliptical and reads as follows: "Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!" It is an exclamation, just as we might say to a friend whose presence had been very helpful, "Unless you had come!" What would that friend understand us to mean? Let gratitude for benefits received and for strength inspired fill the blank, and we really say something like this: "Unless you had come, I had not known what to do; unless you had come, I had fainted." Our un-

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finished sentence says all that. Silence of a certain kind is more eloquent than words. There is a way of saying much by leaving some things unsaid.

It cannot consistently be claimed that the translators of the Authorized Version were especially inspired in their choice of language where words had to be supplied, but it is difficult to see how in their human wisdom they could have done better in this case. In Calvin's Version, the ellipsis is supplied by the clause, "I had perished," making it read "I had perished unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." The meaning is substantially the same. Possibly the latter is somewhat more intense. The obvious meaning of the Psalmist is to express the sustaining quality of faith in God.

And in truth, there is no tonic for tired, and tried, and timid souls like faith. Faintness of heart is a common infirmity. The most heroic souls have their moments of discouragement. Elijah had his. Martin Luther had his. In each case, the despondency was the result of a temporary lapse of faith. Elijah's faith was not lost in intellectual doubt; neither was Luther's. That is not the only way of losing faith, by any means. Our faith wanes when we dwell overmuch on the strength of our opposition. Elijah was absorbed in thought about the direful threat of Jezebel; Luther in thought about the power of Rome. So they fainted, when they forgot for an hour the strength of their God, and the trustful challenge, "If He be for us, who can be against us?"

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It was so with Elisha's servant at Dothan. The young man saw the Syrians with their unfolded banners, and their unscabbarded swords, and straightway his knees smote together, and his valor oozed away like icicles in April, and his tongue stammered, "Alas, my Master, how shall we do?" Of course he must do something. Short-sighted people always inquire at such times, "How shall we do?" but that is because they have not learned "the passionate valor of patience." Then was Elisha serene and fearless, and far from fainting, because he believed to see the army of God.

The majority of men, however, are not called upon to fight the great world-battles that Elijah and Luther fought. Our temptation to faintness comes from the multitude of trifling cares, the dull monotony of toil, the ceaseless round of daily duties, the exhaustion of labor which after all seems not to count for anything, the thousand nameless irritations to which our lives are subject. You must understand me when I say that what wears, and wearies, and worries us most, is drudgery—doing the same things day after day, long after they have ceased to be amusing, sewing machines and sweepers, bidding and buying, crowded hours and tired hands. Strong must be the soul that does not faint under the strain of these things.

Then there are emergencies that test our reserve force to the utmost—the failing health, the shattered nerves, the sick room, enforced inactivity, helplessness; the broken fortune, business failure, mortgage foreclosed, to move out of our own house

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to a rented one; the tongue of slander, the open calumny, the whispered detraction; or there may be a prodigal in the home, or far from home; or a skeleton in the closet reaching out its fleshless fingers, and flinging wide the door that curious crowds of "little chattering daws of men" may peck at us; misfortune, sorrow succeeding sorrow, until, wrestling with failure in the dark, it leaves us lame. Do any of you know what it is to faint then? Ah, then we need support to save us from profound depression, and such support is faith.

"A sovereign balm for every wound,  
A cordial for our fears."

We do not faint when we "believe to see the goodness of the Lord." It is when we cease to believe, that we begin to faint. We have all observed people passing through experiences so severe that we shuddered even to think they might come to us, yet meeting misfortune so bravely, and deporting themselves so calmly, that we have said, "I do not see how they bear up. It would crush me." What is the explanation? They have some secret source of strength. There is some hidden manna that we do not know.

It is not always faith that sustains. There are other things that strengthen human hearts. It may be love. It was love in the case of a mother, whose only son was an invalid for sixteen years. Such self-immolation, such entire devotement of body and mind to the welfare of another, I never saw. Again and again that mother slept no more than three successive hours in twenty-four for a

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week. Then would come a brief but precarious period of relief to the sufferer, and then another season of sleepless vigil at his bedside. After a while the boy was taken to the hospital, to the surgeon's table, where amputation at the hip joint was performed, and the mother stood by him there. By and by he went to his grave, and there ended sixteen years of the sublimest maternal sacrifice possible. That mother had faith which kept her heart from fainting at the grave of her idol, but it was something else that prompted her long service. She might have said, "I had fainted if I had not loved him so." Then I have known a woman's lofty pride to keep her from fainting under the unspeakable burden of a drunken and dissolute husband. Sometimes it is hope upon which the soul leans when troubles multiply, and almost every staff has broken. But there is nothing like faith, a strong and lively faith in God, to invigorate the heart. It is this that giveth power to the faint and increaseth strength to them that have no might. It is this which enables us to mount up with wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint.

There is no trouble or distress; there is no exhaustion or depression; there is no real or apparent evil that faith will not aid us to endure. What patience it teaches, what love it inspires, what courage it implants, what hope it bids us cherish! Job cried, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." That was the triumph of faith. The Psalmist cried, "When my heart is overwhelmed,

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lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." That was the triumph of faith. And a host of others, apostles, prophets, martyrs in other times, and saints and heroes in our own, say, "I had fainted if I had not believed." There is nothing which is more likely to depress the spirits of Christian workers, who labor and long for the coming of God's kingdom among men, than the apparent triumph of vice over virtue, the defeat of righteousness, the prevalence of wickedness, wickedness in high places, (wickedness in heavenly places, as Paul terms it), wickedness in legislative bodies, wickedness in gubernatorial chairs, wickedness in magisterial seats, wickedness enthroned. There has been a contest, local, or provincial, or national, in which the issue concerned some moral question, and the good cause is defeated, it may be by the treachery or indifference of supposed friends. There is an emotion of profound discouragement which all good men share, and they would lose heart but that they "believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Believing this, they learn to "bide a wee," as they say in Scotland, to labor on in hope that the day will yet come when crime and cruelty and ignorance shall cease, and holiness shall be the common law of life.

"For humanity sweeps onward ; where to-day the martyr stands,  
On the morrow crouches Judas, with the silver in his hands;  
Far in front the cross stands ready, and the crackling fagots burn,  
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return,  
To glean up the scattered ashes into history's golden urn."

The fact is, no man is well qualified to be of much service in Christian work, or in moral reform,

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until he is secure from faintheartedness, in the faith that takes in the divine view, and says, "It shall be as God promises."

You will observe a strange phrase in the text. And it is no invention of the translators. "Unless I had believed to see." There it is in that very order; do not transpose a single word. "Believed to see" sounds strange to us in an age one of whose popular proverbs is, "Seeing is believing." The formula of the Psalmist is, "Believing is seeing." And that is the Christian's formula, "Believing is seeing." "Seeing is believing" is a popular saying, but it is a popular sophism. Only the superficial thinker says, "I am sure of what I see." The serious thinker knows that we are not so sure of what we see as of what we believe. Lawyers know from the contradictions of testimony how untrustworthy the senses are, and none is more so than sight. To illustrate: In a rural community of Western New York on the 15th day of December, 1894, two women who had been left alone in their home were murdered. The murderer or murderers have not yet been apprehended. At the post mortem examination the eyes of one of the victims were examined under a glass, and five men, one of them a physician, and all intelligent and reputable men, say that they saw in one eye the picture of a man, presumably the murderer. They describe the man's clothing in the picture. So, here are five men of average intelligence at least, honest and disinterested, who say they saw something. But there are fifty men, just as intelligent and far

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more scientific, who say they could not have seen such a picture in a dead person's eye. They say the idea is absurd. They say those five men only thought they saw what they say they saw. I do not presume to say whether these or those are correct. That is irrelevant and immaterial here. I only remind you that in the realm of natural science reason is not at all afraid to contradict sight. Fifty men match what they believe against what five men saw. Now do you say, "I believe only what I see?" Wait. The mind has eyes. Reason is the sight of the mind. The spirit has eyes. Faith is the sight of the spirit. Faith is the higher reason, the reason of the soul, and what we see with the wonderful sight of the soul, the sight that never grows dim, we may believe and not be ashamed.

In concluding the study of this verse, I direct your thought to a familiar phrase, whose true meaning lies beneath the words, "the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." The Psalmist had in mind this present world when he spoke of the land of the living, and so have we generally when we employ the words. He looked to survive the troubles then encompassing him and not perish under them. Nor was he disappointed. He saw God's goodness to Israel; Israel no longer the reproach of the foolish; Israel exalted among the heathen; himself secure upon the throne; enemies vanquished; rebellion quenched; coffers full; vines and fig trees laden; Jerusalem become the metropolis, sanctuary, university, military depot, and political center of a prosperous race; materials gath-

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ering for the building of a splendid temple. But David knew that he must die, and his thought must have risen to another world when he spoke of the land of the living. For in its strict sense that term is not applicable to this world. This is the land of the dying. "The air is full of farewells to the dying, and mourning for the dead." The earth is honeycombed with graves. We tread upon the dust of generations gone. "All that tread the globe are but a handful to the tribes that slumber in its bosom." Death lurks in every winter storm and swings his scythe in every summer breeze. Disease and accident and violence and age sweep men away as with a flood. Our friends fail before our sight. Empty chairs at every table, vacant places by every hearthstone, graves by every wayside. Even now death crouches at our doors. Have not some of our friends in very recent days laid the bodies of their kindred "under the green of the grass, and the blue of the sky?" Do not many of us every time we leave home, even though for but a little while, kiss somebody's cheeks, and breathe good-bye with a vague fear that one of our number will not be there when we return? No, no, this is the land of the dying. Death worketh in these mortal bodies. We scarcely begin to live before we begin to die. But there is a land of the living, a land where the dead live, never more to die. And however we may see God's goodness here, His goodness in grace and gifts, His goodness in mercy, His goodness in Providence, His goodness even in the painful discipline of delays and denials, we

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shall never know how good He is until we enter the Better Land, where there is neither sea of separation nor night of mystery. "There the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. And the inhabitant shall not say, 'I am sick.' "

" There shall no tempest blow,  
Nor scorching noontide heat;  
There shall be no more snow,  
No weary wandering feet.  
So we lift our prayerful eyes,  
To the hills our fathers trod,  
To the quiet of the skies,  
The Sabbath of our God."

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“Domine, da mihi modo patientiam et postea indulgentiam.”  
—JEREMY TAYLOR’S PRAYER.

“Christ leads me through no darker rooms  
Than he went through before ;  
And he that in God’s kingdom comes  
Must enter by this door.”

—RICHARD BAXTER.

“They who reject suffering do not love, for love is ever ready to suffer for the Beloved One.”

—M. DE BERNIERES LOUVIGNY.

“Let us leave the shame and sin  
Of taking vainly, in a plaintive mood,  
The holy name of grief !—holy therein,  
That by the grief of One came all our good.”

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

## VI.

### The Suffering Savior.

TEXT—"For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."—Heb. 2: 10.

There has been considerable speculation in the Church as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. For a long time it was attributed to Paul, but there are grave doubts about that. Indeed, it is safe to say the theory of the Pauline authorship of this book is untenable. The Greek is not the Greek of Paul. It is not the literary style of Paul. It is better Greek than Paul wrote. And the style is smoother. Paul wrote like a mountain torrent swollen with melting snows and springtime rains. This man wrote like a river flowing majestically between green banks and fringing willows. Luther suggests that Apollos may have written the Epistle. The author must have been a Jew. Apollos was a Jew. The author was mighty in the Scriptures. So was Apollos. The author was a rhetorician. Apollos was an eloquent man.

But it really makes little difference to us who wrote the book. It is apostolic, spiritual, christological. Its value and authority depend in no sense upon its authorship. As some German critic puts it: "We may compare the Epistle to the Hebrews to a painting of perfect beauty which has been regarded as a work of Raphael. If it should be proved that it was not painted by Raphael, we

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have thereby not lost a classical piece of art, but gained another master of first rank."

Whoever the author was—Paul, or Barnabas, or Clement, or Apollos, or some unknown writer of the apostolic age, his purpose was to strengthen the faith of Hebrew Christians who were peculiarly exposed to trials of their faith and temptations to apostasy. There was less in the Gospel to appeal to their senses, than in Judaism; the simple worship of the saints was in evident and even painful contrast to the stately ceremonials of their fathers; the deep beauty and suggestive symbolism of the old service were continually beckoning them back. Then there were those who reminded them that their Master was a very humble man, and not the Prince of the House of David; that he had lived a lowly life, and had died an ignominious death; that they had forsaken glorious things to follow a Crucified Carpenter. Added to all this, persecution and contumely were heaped upon them. They were accounted as unpatriotic and profane. The scorn of the Greek and the sneer of the Roman were much to bear. But the reproach of their kinsmen was more.

They needed encouragement. They needed strengthening. God touched the heart and hand of some great man to write a word in due season to the weary. So the effort of the author is to show how much better are these new things than the old; how much better a sacrifice once for all than a daily sacrifice (he calls the Gospel "a new and living way," which may be rendered "a freshly slain and

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still bleeding way”) how much better a High Priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, than a high priest human and fallible, who must make sacrifice for his own sin as for that of the people; how much better a spiritual mountain than the mount of law. He says, in substance, “You have left glorious things, but you have not lost anything, for you have come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” He shows how glorious is the character of Jesus Christ, how exalted His person. He argues how necessary it was that He should suffer in order to be a perfect Savior. And in this argument, the text belongs: “It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, (that is, it was just like Him, it was according to a law of His eternal nature,) in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

The effect of this argument must have been twofold. It increased their confidence in the divineness of the new order; and it reminded them that as their Savior was perfected through sufferings, so they should have fellowship with Him in their sufferings. And these lessons are for us. But before we come to them, there are some subordinate

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thoughts in the text which should not be forgotten.

We have here a comprehensive summary of the attributes of God: "For whom are all things, and by whom are all things"—universal sovereignty and universal creative power.

Moreover we have a kind of index of the vast, inclusive purpose of God in redemption; it is to bring "many sons unto glory." This is the end and aim of the Gospel, and of the whole chain of events which lead up to it; to this end the promise was given in the sin-cursed garden; to this end were all the revelations to the fathers by the prophets; to this end the patient unfolding of the doctrine of salvation by sacrifice—to bring many sons unto glory.

Somebody asked Jesus once, "Are there few that be saved?" And often we ask that question. Here is the answer: God is not satisfied to save a few. He will have many. A host of the ransomed are already before the throne. A multitude that no man can number sing the unceasing song. The saved are many.

And they are not merely ransomed souls—they are ransomed sons. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."

That word "glory" is one of the richest in all the lexicon of the soul. What is it? What does it suggest to you? The glory of a Mohammedan paradise? The glory of rest on terraced hills where perfumed breezes blow over banks of asphodel? The glory of banqueting by rivers of delight?

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Ah, there is a better glory than that. It is the glory of conquest over sin, the glory of being made meet for an inheritance with the saints in light, the essential glory of sonship—the glory of similitude to the divine ideal. It is to this glory we are called.

And this is the office of the Son of God, to bring us to glory, to lead us as a general leads his soldiers to victory and as he leads them home in triumph after victory. So He is called the "Captain of our salvation." The word means, "prince, leader." And Jesus Christ has a right to the title, for He leads His people; He furnishes our armor; He knows our dangers and can deliver us; He knows our doubts and can dispel them; He knows the subtlety of our enemy and can defeat him. He knows,—He knows because He has suffered.

This brings us to the great thought of the text, the great thought of the chapter, the great thought of the epistle, the great thought of the New Testament, the great thought of the whole Book—The Suffering Saviour.

He could not be our Captain and not suffer. He must share our lot. He could not be a leader and not suffer. There never was a leader in any great work who did not earn the crown of leadership by wearing a crown of suffering. If you say, "How does a leader suffer more than those he leads?" I reply, By so much as he has greater capacity for leadership, he has greater capacity for pain. Mountains are measured by their shadows. Men by their sensibilities. A general suffers more in defeat, he suffers more in the suspense of battle,

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whether its issue be defeat or victory, than a private soldier. An artist suffers more in the realization of the unattainableness of his ideal than a mechanic in the consciousness that he has not done his work properly. It is one of the penalties of rank to suffer. Who suffered most in the Civil War? The man whose brother's blood bespattered his canteen, as he fell with a death-groan at his side, but who could not stop to kiss the young boy's face or say good-bye? The maiden who "wiped the death-damp from her soldier-lover's brow?" The wife who "bound up the gashed bosom of her husband?" The mother whose firstborn was rocked to sleep beneath the waves in the Cumberland, man-of-war? Nay, there was one man among us whose heart was as a sensitive tablet upon which all these sorrows wrote their lines. It was the man who said to Joshua Speed, "Stay with me Joshua, I never sleep Thursday nights, Friday is execution day in the army."

Then coarseness knows no such pain as does refinement. The jelly-fish is so nearly nothing it does not feel the knife that divides it. The higher the type of life, the finer the sensibilities, the keener the intellectual faculties, the more exquisite the taste, the greater the depth of passion, the more is felt the burden of the world's sorrow, the world's moral ugliness, the world's out-of-jointness, the ruin of sin—"the deep disease of life."

This being true, no other man ever suffered as Jesus suffered. He suffered in degree as no other could suffer, for his sensibilities were never blunted by sin. It is sometimes said that children do not

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know what sorrow is. But that is a great mistake. They do not know the sorrow we know, "the sorrow of years;" thank God they do not. Their hearts would break with it. But their little losses and crosses are felt more deeply than we feel ours. Why, a child will cry his eyes out for a lost toy, and sob his heart sore because of a faint rebuke. A little boy who had been guilty of some slight act of discourtesy to his mother was sent to bed without his usual good-night kiss. He crept up to his room crying, and an hour later, when his mother came to see, as mothers are wont, if he was warmly tucked in, she saw the teardrops on his face and heard him sobbing faintly in his sleep, with his arms stretched out toward her bed in mute appeal for pardon. In childhood there is capacity for suffering because there is unblunted sensibility. Christ had the child-heart all through life. So when He saw the mournful caravan of wandering men, when He heard the long sad monotone of human woe, every heart-beat became a heartache. That was why He wept over Jerusalem. That was the secret of the sweat-drops and blood-beads of Gethsemane.

"Into the woods my Master went,  
Clean forspent, forspent.  
Into the woods my Master came,  
Forspent with love and shame,  
But the olives they were not blind to Him,  
The little gray leaves were kind to Him  
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him  
When into the woods He came.

"Out of the woods my Master went,  
And He was well content;  
Out of the woods my Master came,  
Content with death and shame.  
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,  
From under the trees they drew Him last:  
'Twas on a tree they slew Him last,  
When out of the woods He came."

## The Gospel According to Christ.

I would not have you understand me to say that the suffering of Jesus differed from ours only in degree. It differed in kind, as well. As the Son of Mary, He suffered as we suffer, humanly, His suffering differing from ours only in the depth of it. But as the Son of Man, He suffered as no one of us can suffer, divinely, His suffering differing from ours in kind. He suffered sacrificially, atoningly. "He gave His life a ransom for many. He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He bore our sins in His own body upon the tree. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Socrates drank his cup of sour hemlock, and died "like a philosopher," as said Rousseau, but he died for himself alone. He could not die for Plato, his scholar. But Christ died for all His disciples; "He drank down death for every man." His death was a somewhat, without which God could not be just and the justifier of them that believe. If he had not died, we all must have died eternally. Do I believe that? Credo—I believe. I need it. The world needs it. If Christ were only a human sufferer, He would still be our Ideal and our Teacher. But the ideal has no power to stir us, truth no power to move us, until we have been delivered from our sin. We need a Divine Savior to put His undergirding arms beneath us and lift us up out of the miry clay. Behold such a Savior in Calvary's bleeding Victim, Easter's risen Master, Olivet's ascending Conquer-

## The Suffering Savior.

or, Heaven's interceding High Priest! The hope of sinners is in the Crucified.

Remembering this, believing this, venturing my whole soul upon it, yet I am comforted, and I would comfort you, by the remembrance that the man Jesus was made perfect through sufferings; that His sufferings were disciplinary; that thereby His human graces grew both sweet and strong; that therein He proved Himself our Brother, bearing what we bear, drinking the cup of sorrow and eating the bread of bitterness, walking the way we walk, limited as we are limited by poverty and weakness, in order that thenceforth no man might say, "The heavens are dumb: God does not care for me or pity me."

Men were looking for some kind of a Savior, but not for a Suffering Savior. They thought He would come to startle the world with His splendor and subdue it with His fear. But lo! He comes, a suffering servant, a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, laying His humble life across all their theologies and mythologies, and teaching them that God cares for them, cares for the feeble and the weakling, that He cares because He was a sufferer Himself, and that He suffered because He cared.

So, little by little, through the centuries, the idea of God has been reformed by the life of Christ. A great warrior with a heathen conception of God, said on the eve of a battle, "God thunders up there, and I thunder down here." But there came a time when he knew better, and Napoleon, walking under the willows of a desolate island of the sea reflected

## The Gospel According to Christ.

upon the weakness of power and the power of weakness.

The child had a truer idea of God, who, when someone asked him, "Where does Jesus live?" replied, "He lives in our alley now." That is right. Jesus identifies Himself with His people. He was tempted in all points like as we are. Some one says, "Jesus suffered the temptations of His day, but He knew nothing of the temptations of modern life: He was never a college student; He was never a school teacher; He was never a business man; He was never a candidate for office." No, but He was tempted in all points like as we are, because the tempter appealed to every motive, to every possible infirmity within the compass of human life. His armor was tried at every point.

Dr. A. J. Palmer, in his lecture on "Company D, or The Die-no-mores," tells of the gallant charge of our troops on the almost impregnable intrenchments of Fort Wagner. And he describes how the captain of his company, leading his men, fell mortally wounded, and lay there dying all the hours of that awful night, the darkness illumined only by the light of bursting shells. The men who lay wounded about him heard him calling more and more faintly, until death sealed his lips, "Die-no-mores, follow me! Die-no-mores, follow me! Die-no-mores, follow me!" So died the captain of Company D, glorious even in defeat. My brothers, do you not hear our Captain calling in the heat and strife of our battle with sin, "Follow me?" He leads the way. He suffered. He bled. He died.

## The Suffering Savior.

But He is not defeated, for wresting victory from the enemy He rises from His grave, and marches on, still calling to us "Follow me!" Oh, who would not follow such a Leader?

"If I find Him, if I follow,  
What His guerdon here ?  
Many a sorrow, many a labor,  
Many a tear.

If I still hold closely to Him,  
What hath He at last ?  
Sorrow vanquished, labor ended,  
Jordan passed.

If I ask Him to receive me,  
Will He say me Nay ?  
Not till earth, and not till Heaven,  
Pass away.

Finding, following, keeping, struggling,  
Is He sure to bless ?  
Saints, Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs,  
Answer Yes !"



The Anointing at Bethany.

“ ‘This vast sum should have been given to the poor,’ ”  
urged the treasurer severely.

“The eyes of Jesus softly sought those of Mary. He smiled gravely.

“Mary glanced from Him to her brother, then looked at the Rabbi. Her heart was so full of adoration that she could not have spoken a word. Lazarus watched the two in the sacred silence which now so often enveloped him. He made no effort to enter into the scene.

“Slowly raising one white, tremulous finger, Mary pointed at her brother solemnly, and sank upon her knees at the feet of Jesus. There she veiled her face. The eyes of the guests filled.

“A fragment of the broken alabastron rolled in the direction of Judas, who observed it uncomfortably.”

—ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.

*The Story of Jesus Christ.* Page 305.

“Behold us, the rich and the poor,  
Dear Lord, in thy service draw near ;  
One consecrateth a precious coin,  
One droppeth only a tear ;  
Look, Master, the love is here.”

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

## VII.

### The Anointing at Bethany.

TEXT—"And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she broke the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."—Mark 14:3-9.

Two such incidents are recorded in the life of our Lord. Both anointings were by women, and both occurred while Jesus was at supper with His friends. But the events differ in other particulars. This anointing is described by Matthew, Mark and John. The inference is that Luke was not present. But he was present, probably, on another occasion, when a woman anointed Jesus, and when the host, a Pharisee, objected to the presence of the woman because of her questionable reputation. This event he describes, without naming either the host or the woman, but she is generally believed to have been Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus had "healed of evil spirits and infirmities."

The event described in this chapter occurred in Bethany, at the house of one Simon, known as "Simon the leper." The woman most likely was

## The Gospel According to Christ.

Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus, and the disciples were the complainants, on account of the costliness of the ointment.

The anointing was not in itself an exceptional thing. In that Eastern climate with its dry air and dusty roads, where people walked in open sandals, instead of shoes, it was as much a part of the hospitality of a host to provide for the washing and anointing of a guest's feet, as it is now to show a guest who has come on a long journey to his room, where he may wash, and make himself comfortable and presentable. This duty was usually attended to by servants. But the peculiar features of this anointing were that it was not a servant, but an honored and honorable guest who did the menial task, and that she used a vase of her own expensive oil for the anointing.

These were not, however, the only notable features of the event. It was a notable group of characters. I think I would rather have been present in that company than at any other feast or banquet I have ever heard of.

There is the host himself. We know him as "Simon the leper;" but he is no leper now, or he would not be entertaining friends in his home. He was a leper once, but Jesus has healed him. He is a leper no longer, but we call him "Simon the leper" still. Is not that in perfect harmony with social custom? How disfigurements cling to a man all his life! There is nothing that people remember so well as the sins of other people's past. "There goes Smith, the drunkard." "Why he

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doesn't look like a drunkard—he hasn't the trade mark of the toper." "No—he isn't a drunkard now, but he used to be, and the name still clings to him." So, Simon used to be a leper, and the name still clings to him. Is that unjust? I will not say. It is severe, certainly. It is inconvenient, too, to have people remember our infirmities after we have recovered from them. But it is one of the things designed to hedge us in and keep us straight. Know this, young man, you cannot go astray from the path of honor and good report, without being reminded of it in after years, even though you may retrace every step with blistered feet, and burning, briny eyes. Christ may heal you of your leprosy, but nothing can cleanse the stain your leprosy has left upon the memory of others. All the perfumes of Araby cannot sweeten that little spot.

Here is a guest who cannot escape our notice; he is Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, and called back from the grave, from four days' residence in the spirit world. I think I should like to sit by him and talk with him. He shall do all the talking. I want to hear what he says about the other world. Why does he not speak? I mean, why have we not some record of what he experienced while he was absent from the body? Surely "The Gospel according to Lazarus" would be a most important book. Here is the one man on all the earth who knows what death is, and what is after death. Why does he not speak—speak to the empty arms and aching hearts of those who have loved and lost? Or can he? I do not think he can.

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Paul once had an experience of heavenly vision; not merely a vision from heaven, but a vision of heaven. He says he was "caught up into the third heaven." He declares he saw and heard what it was "not lawful to utter," and he uses a word which is better translated "possible"—not possible to utter. The seal of silence was henceforth upon his lips as to what lies beyond the veil. It must have been so with Lazarus, also. Nor does this seem strange when we consider that we can understand only what is apprehended either by our senses or our reason. For example: A man who lives wholly in the senses, who is entirely absorbed in material things, can not understand a problem in pure intellection. It is beyond him, because it is supersensuous. As far as intellection is above sensation, so far above human comprehension would be any attempt to describe what is beyond the grave.

Go to a race of people who have been born and who have always lived in an underground cave, and attempt to describe to them the wonders of this upper world. What will they know—what can they know of sunshine, or color? Of mountains, or valleys, or seas? By what language could you describe to them the beauty of a sunrise, or the glory of a midnight sky? Not by their language, for they have no words for such visions. You may as well be silent. They cannot understand until they themselves emerge from their cold cavern into the world of light.

That Lazarus lived after he was dead, that he was still Lazarus, the loving brother and faithful friend,

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is proof of the deathless nature of the soul, and of the certain survival of identity. That is as much as we can understand of his experience. But that is enough to assure us that when these bodies shall be entombed as Lazarus was, no gate of iron or bars of stone can hold that part of us which makes us what we are.

Here are two other guests, forever associated with Lazarus in human thought because his sisters. How they loved one another! Having no families of their own, the three composed a home in which, of all places on earth, the Son of Man most loved to be. They knew not what earthly immortality they earned by making Him welcome under their roof.

Martha and Mary represent two different classes. Martha, plain, practical, housewifely, undemonstrative; Mary, impressionable, sentimental, spectacular, enthusiastic. The former represents the devotional, the latter the emotional, nature. Martha lived chiefly in one realm, Mary in another. In Martha's vocabulary, work, service, duty, had the greatest part. But love, joy, adoration, were Mary's largest words.

Such differences we sometimes see in persons of the same family. Martha is the ritualistic Episcopalian, proper, orderly, devout, reading her prayers from a book, and worshiping in silence her acknowledged Lord. But Mary is inclined to be an unconventional Methodist, zealous, impulsive, careless of precedent, praying the prayer that springs to her lips from an overflowing heart, and expressing her gratitude in most unexpected ways.

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Are these contradictory characters? Are they antagonistic? Not at all. Jesus loved them both. And He loved Lazarus, who was another type. From the fact that we have no word of his reported, even on themes concerning which he might have spoken in language his friends could understand, it may be he was one of the quiet kind, less practical than Martha, less sentimental than Mary, but more thoughtful, more reflective than either. He is the Presbyterian of the family, solid, sound, silent, philosophical. Neither is a fully rounded character. Martha needs more spontaneity in her devotion, Mary needs more decorum in her emotion, and Lazarus needs an occasional revision of his creed. But they are all the friends of Jesus; and give Him the guest room in their houses, and the throne room in their hearts. And He stands by them when one of their number is taken away, and He will own them in the day "when He cometh to make up His jewels."

Of course I do not mean to intimate that all the Marthas are Episcopalians, and all the Marys Methodists, and all the Lazaruses Presbyterians. The three are represented in all our churches. The fact is, as individuals, we all have something of Martha's devotional nature, and something of Mary's emotional nature, and something of the silent brother's doctrinal nature, in us. And we all ought to have, in about equal proportion, to be full-grown Christians.

But there are other guests. Some of the disciples are at the supper—probably the most of

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them. Judas is here, Judas Iscariot. It is he who is grieved at the extravagance of Mary's gift. But he is not alone in his condemnation of the prodigal expenditure of the ointment. Others are inwardly indignant, and say among themselves, "Why this waste? It might have been sold, and given to the poor. The proceeds would have bought a whole bakery." What shall we call that spirit,—the spirit that judges everything by intrinsic standards? Call it commercialism, merchantilism, utilitarianism. It is a heart that beats worldward underneath the garments of a pseudo-philanthropy. It has its cause in the incapacity of some souls to appreciate the significance and worth of fine sentiment, incapacity to appreciate anything which has no market value. Such natures have no inclination to anything that cannot be turned to practical advantage. They incline to facts, rather than fancies. Money is a fact. We can weigh money, hold it in our hands, count it. But things aesthetic are superfluous. Are they? Are we only to think of practical things? What of the things that are only lovely? What of painting, poetry, music, flowers, friendship—what of the arts that sweeten and give grace to life?

A man says, "I went to see a family yesterday who had applied for aid. And what do you think I found in their home? I found a dozen fine pot-plants, blooming flowers that might be sold in market for two dollars at least. Why my wife has no such flowers as those. I concluded they did not need help while they could indulge their taste in

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flowers." Ah, there is the Judas—"To what purpose is this waste?"

Is everything waste that is not bread and butter? Why Mahomet was a better Christian than that. He said, "If I had two loaves of bread, and were starving, I would sell one and buy hyacinths, for they would feed my soul." So time has woven into one bouquet the hyacinths of Mahomet and the lilies of Christ.

Have not flowers a real value,—flowers that are so eloquent with suggestiveness, so quickening to memory and hope? It was a poet who found a violet blooming in the woods and withheld his hand from plucking it, but stooped down and kissed the modest blossom saying "Dear little flower, God thought thee; I will not destroy thee." And it was a botanist who, when he saw the flowers of his homeland after long absence, knelt down on the green turf and thanked God in an ecstasy of joyful tears.

There was a boy in New York who used to carry to his desk in a store every morning a fresh flower, and keep it in his sight all day, because it kept him from evil thoughts. Dean Farrar tells of one of the most vicious women in Millbank Prison who was found upon her knees one day sobbing and clasping something to her breast. She had been touched to the heart by some blossoms of a white flower such as bloomed under her window in girlhood. It was only sentiment, but the passionate power of life may be permanently affected by sentiment.

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It was an overflowing heart of sentiment that prompted Mary to anoint her Savior. But, though Judas criticised, and all wondered at it, Jesus pronounced it a good work, and crowned it with a promise of immortal remembrance, which promise has most surely been fulfilled. Indeed this sermon is some part of its fulfillment.

I suppose there are a good many people who look upon the great cathedrals of Europe as a needless if not guilty waste. I do not. It is true they were built in an age when the spirit of humanitarianism was sadly deficient, but they who built them did what they could to honor Christ. And I thank them for what they did. In the shadow of some of those temples I have rested, a stranger, and by their tuneful chimes I have been awakened at midnight. I thank the architects and builders. I thank the artists that painted such altar pieces as the "Descent from the Cross" and the "Adoration." I thank the cunning skill that fashioned the figures which, though beyond the close inspection of the eye, are nevertheless so carved that everyone is perfect. They said "God's eyes see everywhere." So, they did what they could, as perfectly as they could. Those cathedrals are not monuments of waste. They are witnesses of faith. And I believe God is well pleased with them. Anything that expresses love to Christ is pleasing to Him, and that which is acceptable to Him ought not to be despised by us.

"Simon the leper" did what he could—he provided a supper for the Savior and his friends. Martha did what she could—she helped to serve.

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Lazarus did what he could—he looked silent admiration at the arrangement. Mary did what she could—she anointed Jesus. She expressed her love by that act, and no soul ever said by any word or act or secret sigh or sob, “Lord Jesus I love thee,” but that He, stooping from His high throne, replied, “So have I loved you.”

I wish some word of mine might lead you all to be willing to do what you can to express your love for Christ. I do not know just what you can do, but I know you can all do something to merit the blessed approval, “He hath done what he could.” No higher eulogy was ever written of anyone than that. It may not be a great deed, a world-moving, epoch-making deed, but if it be all you can do, it is enough. Some people fritter their lives away in vain attempts to do what they were not designed to do. There is a fable of a bee, an oriole, an orange blossom, and a fox, that held a council to devise plans to reform the world. The orange blossom resolved to sing, and in trying, it lost its fragrance. The oriole resolved to move a log so that the worms could have a chance, and it worked all summer, but accomplished nothing, and lost its voice. The fox resolved to eat chickens no more, but to live on worms instead. It soon died. The bee resolved to keep on making honey, but said, “Hereafter I will lay up honey in hives instead of trees,” and the bee was the only genuine reformer among them. The parable may seem foolish, but there is a serious lesson in it. Do just what you can. Speak a word in due season to him that is weary. Ask a home-

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less lad to dine with you to-day. Send a letter to some forgotten one. Invite a stranger to occupy your pew in church. Bring a friend with you to the place of prayer. You do not know how much that may mean. Fifty years ago, a friendless lad entered Detroit, twelve dollars in debt, and secured a position at twelve dollars a month. Some one made him welcome in a Methodist church. He became a member, an official member, a banker, a millionaire, a princely giver, and when he died a little while ago, the strongest man in Michigan Methodism had passed away. About the same time, there was a young physician in Attica, Indiana. He had few patients and little money. The pastor of a certain church met him one Wednesday evening and said, "Dr. Evans, come go to prayer meeting with me to-night." He accepted the invitation, came again, became a member of the church, moved to Illinois, became one of the founders of a great university, moved to Colorado, became the first Governor of that State, and helped to found another university, in Denver.

Now do you say you can do nothing for Christ and His Church? You forget. Your silent presence in the House of God is something. Your voice in prayer, or song, or confession, is something. Your gift of silver and of gold is something. I hope the most of you are doing what you can. I am not so sure you are doing all you can.



The Beauty of Holiness.

“Ever toward man’s height of nobleness,  
Strive still some new progression to contrive,  
Till, just as any other friend’s, we press  
Death’s hand ; and having died, feel none the less  
How beautiful it is to be alive.”

—HENRY S. SUTTON.

“That which befits us, embosomed in beauty and wonder as we are, is cheerfulness and courage, and the endeavor to realize our aspirations.”

—EMERSON.

“Man is the hero of the eternal epic composed by the Divine Intelligence.”

—SCHELLING.

“There is no sculpturing like that of character.”

—BEECHER.

## VIII.

### The Beauty of Holiness.

TEXT—"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."—Psalm, 29: 2.

It was once believed that there were races of men on the face of the earth with no instinct of worship. But as knowledge has advanced that theory has been abandoned. The Kaffirs of Africa, the bushmen of Australia, the Tierra del Fuegians of South America, types of the wildest men—all have been found to be worshipers of something.

It is as natural for man to worship as it is for a plant to grow towards the light. And that is observable from the lichen in the Arctic Zone, or the dwarfed bush of the Bad Lands, or the poor pale vine in your cellar, to the pine trees on the mountains of Norway. The spiritual organism of man contemplates worship as certainly as the physical organism contemplates exercise, or the mental organism thought. The admonition of the Psalmist to worship therefore was no new idea. Especially was it not new to the Hebrews, for they were a worshipful people. The attitude of reverence was more largely developed among them than among any other nation.

Nor was it a new thing to them to worship the Lord. Him they had worshiped since Abraham, their father, followed the morning star of destiny from Ur of the Chaldees and found his way to

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Shechem. To them the Lord had been especially revealed. He had been their Deliverer out of Egypt and their Savior in the wilderness. So they worshiped Him. Possibly no religious phrase that the Psalmist used sounded so familiar to their ears as the first three words of the text, "Worship the Lord." But he added some words to that phrase which greatly enhanced its meaning. He said, "Worship the Lord in beauty."

Here then are two words which had some relation in the mind of the author of the text—Worship and Beauty. And of the latter I would now speak. There is as surely an instinctive sense of beauty as of worship. The fine arts grow out of that sense. And what nation is there, what tribe, under any sky, or by any river, among whom we do not find some evidence of art—of an effort on the part of man to represent the beautiful in nature. It may be but a feeble effort, and its result may be very crude, but, like the simple worship of savage tribes, it is the unstudied expression of an universal impulse.

Here then are two primitive impulses, that to worship, whose end is religion, and that to represent the beautiful, which leads to art. The former suggests the inquiry "What is God?" The latter, "What is Beauty?" And how differently men have answered these questions. Buddha says, "God is order, law." Mohammed says, "God is fate, force." Buddha was reflective. Mohammed was active. Each imputes something of his own character to God.

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I ask one, "What is Beauty?" and he says, "The ripple of waters, the caroling of birds, the whistling of winds, the ringing of hammers." He is a musician. I ask another: he says, "The colors of the rainbow, the sunset, the flowers; a landscape transfigured by the twilight; a mountain crowned with snow and capped with clouds—that is beauty." He is a painter. I ask another: he says, "The human form; the unconscious grace of a little child; the repose of sleep or death." He is a sculptor. And so we see that ideas of beauty are as various as modes of worship. That which excites in one a keen delight may be unattractive to another. The difference is in the mind, not in the object.

It was on a fine October day that a party of Englishmen went fox-hunting. A certain two were together. As they rode along, the morning sky clear; the air crisp, cool; the clatter of hoofs "keeping time like the music of a chime," the hounds' deep baying wakened a thousand echoes in the frosty forest air. Said one "Is not that music glorious?" And the other answered "What music? I cannot hear the music for the barking of the dogs, you know." Why that was a great part of the music, but it aroused no sentiment in the fellow's mind. There was no sentiment there to arouse.

It must be admitted that education has much to do with a proper sense of the beautiful, education of the mind and of the eye. It takes an educated mind to perceive the beauty of a poem. It is recorded that at an evening gathering in London,

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when Alfred Tennyson read his then unpublished poem "The Princess," one of the party fell asleep. He did not know that they were privileged to hear the first reading of a poem that should ring forever in the avenues of song. It takes an educated eye to profit the mind by travel. Some American tourists visited the British Museum, that magnificent institution which has gathered under one roof more that is of value to students than any other collection with the possible exception of the Vatican. On their departure one turned to another and asked "What impressed you most of all you saw?" And he made answer, "I never saw such monstrous door mats before!" He looked down, the other looked around. Possibly the man who saw only the big door mats was a carpet weaver. Certainly he was no student.

But the best trained mind and eye are not capable of perceiving all beauty. There is beauty that the soul alone can perceive. The eye is attracted by external or physical beauty, the mind by that which owes its beauty to superior thought, the soul by that whose beauty inheres in moral quality, spiritual fineness.

There is such a thing as moral beauty. It is suggested by the text, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." The Bible has little to say about beauty, but much about holiness, about morality, about character, about courage, about unselfishness, about love, much about the most beautiful things in the world. It has been charged that the Bible is unfriendly to Art; that neither in the Old, nor in

## The Beauty of Holiness.

the New, Testament, is any encouragement to the aesthetic—a contention which cannot be defended. The very springs of poetry are in the Scriptures, and as to Music (poetry and music being the purely ideal arts) it has been truthfully said "Christianity is the only musical religion." Yet it must be remembered that the one great purpose of Christianity is not to refine the taste, but purify the heart.

"Whatsoever things are beautiful, think on these things" says the Apostle. What things are beautiful? Let the text say: Holiness is beautiful—"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Worship the Lord in the beauty of Architecture. Build temples grand and fair. Let their domes pierce the clouds. That is beautiful. Worship the Lord in the beauty of painting. Let saintly masters dream, and put their dreams on canvas. Let there be such pictures as "The Transfiguration," "The Last Supper," "The Crucifixion," "The Shadow of the Cross." They are beautiful. Worship the Lord in the beauty of music. Let anthem and carol and oratorio exalt the name of the Wonderful Christ. That is beautiful. Let organs yield their sweet and solemn sounds. That is beautiful. But remember, all these are means, not ends, and they are worth only so much as they contribute to the beautifying of life, to the production in men of that which is divine, and hence, forever beautiful.

Emerson and Longfellow were friends in early days, and in their prime. But age came on, and Concord and Cambridge exchanged visits infre-

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quently. At last the grave opened for Longfellow, and there gathered a little company to pray and sing before the words were said that committed his body to the ground. Emerson was there, leaning on the arm of his daughter. Memory had failed, so that as he looked on the dead face of his old-time friend, he did not remember who he was, and he was heard to say to his daughter, "I cannot recall his name, but he was a most beautiful soul." What a tribute was that!

Is there any beauty so admirable, so satisfying, so memorable, as the beauty of a soul who has lived for a noble purpose, who has "sung men up to duty by commanding rhyme," who has studied patience in the school of Christ, who has never lowered the standard or played the coward or the fool? That is the finest music, the finest poetry, the finest architecture in the world.

Plato prayed, "May the gods make me beautiful within." It was the beauty of holiness he longed for. He knew that all other beauty is evanescent. Beautiful faces fade when the light of youth goes out of the eye, beautiful forms waste with disease and age, the hand loses its cunning, and the foot its fleetness, but the soul—time writes no wrinkles on its brow, because the soul is not a thing of time.

It is the pitiable weakness of so many, ambitious to be beautiful, that they have no desire to be beautiful within. They seem not to know that the face is translucent, that beauty of mind and of soul shines through a human face as light through porcelain. Joseph Cook speaks of "the solar look"

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in the human face. What does he mean by that? It is the angel face in man. Moses "wist not that the skin of his face shone" when he came down from the Mount of God. His face was supernaturally beautiful because his soul was illumined.

Does not this account for the fact that often, people with very plain, common, even homely, faces, come in time to have an inexpressible charm to those who know them intimately? Madame DeStael was such a person. She was not attractive in appearance; there were a thousand women in Paris who were more handsome, yet Byron called her the most fascinating woman in Europe. That was the power of pure intellect. Hers was a gifted mind. It was Horace Mann, the great educator, who said "Where minds live in the region of pure thoughts and happy emotions, the felicities and sanctities of the inner temple shine out through the mortal tenement, and play over it like lambent flame." Another great writer, a learned professor, says, "I have come to the conclusion that no man or woman can realize the full power of personal loveliness without cherishing noble hopes and purposes, without having something to do, something to live for worthy of humanity, to expand the capacities of the soul and give expression to the body that contains it."

There are few people who are really ugly, and they are not ugly when their eyes flash with genius, or a sweet spirit tunes the voice, or a generous soul glows in the face. "What a homely man," a woman once said as she saw a strange face in a pub-

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lic audience. "He is the last recipient of the Albert Medal," a friend remarked; "I was present when the Queen presented him the Medal. He rescued a family of four by swimming to their assistance when their boat capsized in forty feet of water." The woman looked at him again, and presently said, "He is not so homely as I thought at first sight." She perceived the beauty of heroism.

In his lecture on "The Uses of Ugliness," Mr. Jahu De Witt Miller tells a story of Benjamin Brewster. Benjamin Brewster was once Attorney General of the United States. His face was terribly disfigured, red and raw, his chin drawn as if it had been burned with vitriol. And it had been burned, but not with vitriol—with fire. When he was but a boy, his little sister fell into an open fireplace, and he saved her from the flames, but came out with his face as black as my coat. His face was beautiful in the eyes of those who knew that. It was the beauty of love. On a steamer, crossing the ocean, seats at the dining table are assigned by the steward. Mr. Brewster was once assigned a seat between two women who did not know him. And when they saw his face, they were repelled, and straightway appealed to the steward to be assigned elsewhere. This fact came to Mr. Brewster's knowledge, and he said, "Allow me to sit beside them a single day, and then, I will change my seat if they still desire it." Presently he was introduced to them, and they saw what a gifted mind, what a beautiful spirit he was, what self-command,

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what courtly demeanor, what grace of speech, were his, and begged of the steward that they might remain where they had been assigned.

While I have been speaking, I wonder if your minds have not turned to one whose name is written high among the poets of the English tongue, whose face was so fair that one has said "It was a face to dream about." His was a royal mind, too. His rising star eclipsed the fame of Scott as a poet, and drove the author of "The Lady of the Lake" to writing prose. Of noble birth, of superior education, of liberal fortune, what had he not to make him a very king of men? Only one thing was lacking, and that was moral beauty. He wrote like an angel, but he lived on a much lower level. Then there was Rousseau, a musician, a philosopher, a poet, a novelist, a many-sided genius, of almost peerless intellectual power. But when we learn that he falsely accused a fellow servant, and a girl at that, of theft; that he quarrelled with all his friends; that he refused to allow his five children to bear his name and let them go to a foundling hospital, there seems to be no greatness in him, for he was utterly devoid of moral loveliness.

But how many there are without the gifts and graces that make men great, whose names are radiant with glory that can never die, because they found the secret of soul-power. Their great hearts prompted them to social service, to lives of self-denial for the good of the race, to "a love of the morally beautiful more than life."

It is the glory of the Gospel that it holds up be-

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fore us an ideal which includes every beautiful quality of life—the wisdom of the scholar, the courage of the hero, the prophetic insight of the poet, the enthusiasm of the reformer, the sweet simplicity of the saint. What beauty gathers around the character of Christ. Poetry, music, eloquence, leadership, liberty, love, everything that is gracious, everything that is praiseworthy, everything that is worthy of immortality. O ye who seek the truth, behold Him! And ye who would know the beauty of holiness, know this:

“ Beautiful faces are those that wear,  
(It matters little if dark or fair,)  
The light of a pleasant spirit there.

“ Beautiful hands are those that do  
Work that is earnest and brave and true,  
Moment by moment the whole day through.

“ Beautiful shoulders are those that bear  
Ceaseless burdens of daily care  
With patient grace and daily prayer.

“ Beautiful graves where grasses creep,  
Where brown leaves fall, where drifts lie deep  
Over worn-out hands, O beautiful sleep! ”

All Things against Us.

"All is of God ! If He but wave His hand,  
The mists collect, the rains fall thick and loud,  
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,  
Lo ! He looks back from the departing cloud.  
Angels of life and death alike are His ;  
Without His leave they pass no threshold o'er ;  
Who then would wish or dare, believing this,  
Against His messengers to shut the door ?"  
—LOWELL.

"Christian faith is a grand cathedral with divinely pictured windows. Standing without, you see no glory nor can possibly imagine any ; standing within, every ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendors."  
—HAWTHORNE

## IX.

### All Things against Us.

TEXT—"All these things are against me."—Genesis 42: 26.

There are those who think that every word contained in the Bible is true. But they are mistaken. Now here is a text every word of which is false. And I can name several other texts in the Bible which are equally false. There is a verse in Job which says "All that a man hath will he give for his life." That is not true. At least it is not true of all men. There are possessions that are worth more than life, and there have been men who gave up life rather than yield them. We hardly expect it to be true when we find it was spoken by Satan. Over in the New Testament I find these words: "He saved others; Himself he cannot save." Here is a verse half true and half false. It was spoken of Jesus. He did save others. That was true. But it was not true that He could not save Himself. He could, but would not. For Him to have saved Himself would have been to abdicate His office as Redeemer and Ransom. It is not so strange that half of this statement is false, for it was spoken by the enemies of Jesus.

But the verse I have quoted and characterized as wholly false, was not spoken by Satan, nor by the enemies of the Son of Man. It is the utterance of a good man, a patriarch, a father of the Jewish church. Yet it is as false as the falsehood of Satan. A good man's error is as much an error as the error

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of a bad man. It may not come from the same motive. And that makes all the difference in the righteousness of the speech.

Jacob did not mean to tell a falsehood here. He thought that all these things were against him. But they were not. The error was, as we say, of the head rather than of the heart. His judgment was wrong. He did not reason aright. He did not see things from the right view-point. Nor do we, always. We reason as Jacob did, and come to the same conclusion upon the same premises. Things seem to be against us, and we say they are against us. A few things go wrong, and we say "Everything is going wrong." We forget God. We forget that in the processes of life, as in the mechanism of a watch, all the wheels do not go the same way. So we will not censure Jacob. We will not attempt to excuse his error by saying that he was a peevish old man. It is the custom of the race to judge things by temporary conditions, to charge Fate or Fortune, or Providence, or God, (or whatever name we apply to the Power that superintends the universe) with carelessness, or cruelty. We younger men are guilty of it. When all is fair, and the sky is blue, and the sea is smooth, we say "Things are coming our way." But when we have to row against contrary winds, when we toil, not all night, like the disciples, but all many days and nights, without avail, when the spray mingles with the storm light in the air, and things do not "come our way" as we hoped, we fall to complaining "All things are against us."

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Jacob lived to see that all things were not against him. Joseph was not dead—he was Prime Minister of Egypt. Simeon was not a prisoner awaiting execution. The life of Benjamin was not demanded as a sacrifice to an alien despot—it was his own brother calling for him. Jacob was to have his long-lost son restored to him. Peace and plenty awaited him in the land of Goshen. The things which seemed to be against him were the very things that were most signally for him.

It may benefit us to study Jacob's error. What was it? Or rather, to what was it due? First of all, then, he was a discouraged man. I suppose old men are more easily discouraged than young men. They live more in memory than in hope. A man at thirty-five, or forty, faces disaster, and says "There is yet time to recover all that is lost." He is like the general who saw that his army had been defeated, but measuring the height of the descending sun, said, "There is yet time to win the battle," and did it. But he would not have said that at sunset. The man who suffers defeat at sixty is prone to say "My sun is set. The night is come when no man can work." The weight of years, the accumulated sorrow of a lifetime, breaks the spirit of a man. De Lesseps at fifty would have brought order out of the chaos at Panama. He could not at eighty. He was conscious of the limitation of his time. Old men may be forgiven discouragement, where it is unpardonable in younger men, and yet why should not a man at sixty, with the wisdom and experience of forty years of contact with the world,

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say as did a famous financier in New York who saw all his fortune swept away when he lacked but two years of sixty, "I can do more in ten years than I did in twenty-five; I am wiser. Give me ten years and I will stand again where I stood at fifty." And He did. He had the unbroken spirit that conquers.

We have seen, in these last two or three years a splendid example of what a man may do whose spirit is unbroken, to recover lost ground, long after he has passed the prime of life. An author, a humorist of renown, awakened one morning to find himself a bankrupt. Many a man would have sat down right there and said "All these things are against me," and died insolvent. But not he. He set to work with the zeal of youth to clear his name and make a second fortune. He laughed away the fear that he had done his best work. He smiled in the face of the demon defeat. He took another "Tramp Abroad." He girdled the globe and saw the sunny side of things, and gave us to see it through his eyes, and a few months ago gave a dinner to his creditors, at which each guest found beside his plate, in lieu of the menu card, a check for balance in full. Some one said "That was the best joke Mark Twain ever perpetrated." And the humorist smiled, and said as he pointed to a good-natured German, "It is the first joke of mine that he ever saw through."

A condition of all successful work is that a man be not discouraged to begin with. Blessed is the man who is not easily discouraged, the man who

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looks at difficulties through the big end of a telescope. He may fail. He may attempt the impossible. But he will be more likely to succeed, he will come nearer accomplishing the impossible, than the man who magnifies the possible obstacles before he has begun his work. The world admires a man who will laugh at impossibilities. The world may say unpleasant things about him, but it will get out of his way after a while. The world despises a faint-hearted man. He says, "I cannot do much. Everything is against me." And the world agrees with him, and says "You are quite right. You cannot do much."

There are two words we hear quite often these days—pessimism and optimism. A pessimist is temperamentally what a discouraged man is emotionally. A discouraged man is a pessimist pro tem.

Some people are born with a predisposition to look upon the dark side of things. He was, who, when he first saw a railroad train, said, "Ah, they can never start it, never." But when they started it, and it moved off at a great speed, he said, "Ah, they can never stop it, never." Civilization owes little to such men. If all were of that type nothing that is not already started ever would be, and all that is started would speedily stop. Christianity owes nothing to them. The apostles, the evangelists, the missionaries of the Church, have all been sublime optimists. They have forgotten the difficulties. Or they have remembered them only to use them as stepping-stones to victory. Think

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of Paul. If ever any man had reason to say "All things are against me," he had. But the things that were against him he employed to the advancement of the cause he loved above all things. Chained to a soldier on either side, he preached the Gospel to his military guard. There were at least two men who could not leave before the benediction. A prisoner in Rome, he made converts in Caesar's own household. Towards the close of his life he reviews it all, his stripes, his bonds, his afflictions, and says "The things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel."

There is similar material for illustration in the life of Jacob's own son, Joseph, about whom he was now mourning. He might have been excused for saying "All these things are against me." They did seem to be against him. Cast out by his brethren. Sold into slavery. Put into prison. But he was on his way to the throne of Egypt.

Five hundred years later there was a youth who might have said "All these things are against me." The king was against him. And in an almost absolute monarchy the king has the disposal of his subjects' lives. It is bad enough to have a newspaper against one. How some of us ministers tremble when we have a deacon against us. But David had the king against him. He became an exile—his companions the discontented, the outlaws, the people who could not pay their debts. Hiding in caves, he avoided the wrath of the king. Everything against him. But he was on his way

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to the throne of Israel and the throne of song. God was with him. The very stars were fighting for him. The stones and beasts of the field were in league with him. His shoes were iron and brass. The young lion and the adder he trampled under foot.

He makes a great mistake who reckons up the things that are against him and forgets that God is with him. God was with Jacob. He had made a covenant with God, and God never breaks a promise. The man who covenants with God, and does his best to live for God and for the invisible world, has nothing to fear. Whatever comes to him is for him. He may not know how it is, he may see through a glass darkly, but things are "coming his way" for the Hand that holds the stars as little things is on his side.

O brother, have you said, "All things are against me?" Is God dead? Are the heavens empty? Is the world Fatherless? Take fresh courage to-day. Leave this place your head erect, your hope renewed, your heart lifted up above the world, your eyes filled with a new light as they take in the majestic sweep of things by which God makes all things work together for your good.

"For your good," for do you not love Him? It all depends upon that. The only man who has a right to say "All things are against me" is the man who has shut God out of his life. But to him who fears God and works righteousness, the promise is, "I will show thee the path of life and afterward receive thee to glory." A guide through life, an

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open gate to glory. Is there anything better than that? It covers all the past. It embraces all the present. It secures all the future. All that was, or is, or is to come, is for you. The loss you suffered yesterday was not a loss. You will understand it to-morrow. Jacob did. His last days were his best days. It is always better farther on.

"Faith is singing, sweetly singing,  
Singing in an undertone,  
Singing as if God had taught it,—  
It is better farther on.

"Night and day it sings the sonnet,  
Sings it while it sits alone,  
Sings so that the heart may hear it,—  
It is better farther on.

"Sits upon the grave and sings it,  
Sings it while the heart would groan,  
Sings it while the shadows darken,—  
It is better farther on.

"Farther on—ah! how much farther?  
Count the mile-stones one by one;  
No, not counting, only trusting,  
It is better farther on."

All Things for Us.

“Believe that, however little of tangible present good you have, you have the unseen good of heaven, and the promise of all things to come.” —MRS. A. D. T. WHITNEY.

“In some time, His good time, I shall arrive ;  
He guides me and the bird in His good time.”

—BROWNING. *Paracelsus*.

“Above the seas of gold and glass  
The Christ, transfigured, stands to-day ;  
Below, in troubled currents, pass  
The tidal fates of men away.

“Through that environed blessedness  
Our sorrow cannot wholly rise,  
Nor His swift sympathy redress  
The anguish that in nature lies.

“Yet mindful from His banquet sends  
The guest of God a cup of wine,  
And shares a morsel with His friends,  
Who, wandering, wait without the shrine.”

—JULIA WARD HOWE. *The Eucharist*.

## X.

### All Things for Us.

TEXT—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."—Romans 8: 28.

Twice in the book of Psalms, we read about "dark sayings," by which reference is made to sayings hard to be understood. Once in the New Testament we meet the phrase "hard saying," by which reference is made to a saying difficult of belief. There are many dark sayings in the Scriptures—sayings that are deep with the mystery of eternity; and there are many hard sayings—sayings which seem improbable or paradoxical.

The text is one of the "hard sayings" of the Bible. I think of no Scriptural sentiment which unbelievers more boldly question, or which half-believers more secretly doubt, than this.

The whole world is ready to admit that a part of the proposition is true—that all things work. We live in a restless world. Activity is the law of every atom and of every cell. Living organisms are not the only things that work—all things work. The sands of the sea-shore are endlessly agitated. The stars are marching and countermarching like an infinite army in the sky. The air about us is never stagnant, though invisible. A child looks at a huge stone, and says "Surely here is something that never changes." But he is mistaken. The atoms that compose it are jostling one another. Sometime there may be a "battle of atoms" and the stone will break asunder. All things work—the

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springing grass, the budding flowers, the leafing grove. What animation gleams and murmurs in the sea and air. There is no night, however still, no spot however secluded, no ocean depth, or mountain height, but that, if our senses were only fine enough, in it we might perceive the incalculable and manifold activity of all the elements that constitute the universe. It requires no special faith to believe that all things work. We have only to observe.

Nor does it require special faith to believe that all things work together. The forces of the universe are not blind and aimless—they are not without design or plan. Things work together; that is, they work intelligently; they are adjusted so as to co-operate with one another. We do not live in a realm of chance. There is a Power that preserves order. There is a Mind, a Will, in nature, behind nature, call it what you please, and the consciousness of it is stamped upon the instinct of every race.

I spoke a while ago of the activity of atoms that compose an inorganic substance, such as a stone. That the atoms of such a substance are in ceaseless motion seems incredible, but we take the dictum of science that it is true. But to see how the forces of nature work together, we must come unto the realm of life. A human body is composed of an immense number of cells. They move. They live. They grow. They change. They work. And they work together. A scientist has written a very remarkable article on "The battle of the cells." It is more marvellous than "The battle of

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the atoms." When a living tissue is wounded, you know how nature protects it by building up a wall of dead matter around the wound. There is intelligence in that. It is most wonderful. It is as if each cell were a soldier, and its duty is to defend the body. So when the body is in danger, the infinitesimal soldiers begin to build a wall around the wounded spot, and they build it out of their own bodies!

There are thousands of people who have suffered from pneumonia who nevertheless have recovered and lived for many years. If you should examine the lungs of such a person you would discover that where the disease had its seat the tissue is solid. Yet the person may be unconscious that a part of his lung tissue is dead. What is the explanation of it? Just this: The army of cells set to work to build a wall around the diseased portion of the lung, and they succeeded. They effectually blockaded the enemy, and starved him out! It sounds like fiction, but it is truth. All things work together.

Go where you will in the universe and you will find it true, forces co-operate to accomplish definite and intelligent purposes. The sky is not an enemy of the soil. Sun and soil and springtime rains work together to give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. All things work together.

But here we part company with some. They are perfectly willing to admit that all things work together, that an infinite Intelligence presides over the universe. But when we ascribe to this Intelli-

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gence, benevolence, discriminating love, special providence with reference to human life, they say "We are not so sure of that."

Granted there is an Intelligent Power that governs things, the question arises, Does that Power consider men? If we call that Power God, does He make any difference in dealing with His human creatures between those who love Him and those who do not? Is nature not equally cruel, equally remorseless towards the just and the unjust? That is a great question, and it deserves a serious answer. The text is an answer. It says "All things work together for good to them that love God."

But is it true? Is there anything in human history to support and confirm it? Is God on the side of His people or is He, as Napoleon said, "on the side of the heaviest battalions?" Who wins in life's battle, the weak or the mighty? Does it make any difference whether the weak are right or whether the mighty are wrong? In substance, this is the challenge of unfaith, and of weak faith, in the face of the text: "Does not the man who forgets God get as much good in life as he who loves God and has God in all his thoughts? To which challenge I issue the respectful answer of Philip to Nathanael—"Come and see." And what do we see?

First of all that he who loves God gets a new definition of good. Whether you believe that all things work together for good depends upon what you conceive to be good. Until we come to some understanding as to this, we are in no condition to

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continue the argument. What is good, human good, the highest human good? Whom shall we consult about that? The ungodly man has no one to consult but himself. He will consult his health, his happiness, his income, his pleasure; whatever ministers to these is good. But experience, all the way from the first to the second childhood, testifies that a man is not always a competent judge of what is good for him. The wisest men make mistakes in choosing their own good. The godly man consults God as to what is good. He consults God's Word, with this result: he learns to distinguish between temporal and eternal good. He learns not to confuse visible happiness with good. He learns to see good in what seems evil. He learns to trust that there is good in what seems only evil. He trusts, because he learns that there is a Heart at the centre of things. God is love. God is his Father. He loves God. God loves him. There can no evil come to him in life or death. He says,

"On easy terms with law and fate,  
For what must be I calmly wait,  
And trust the path I cannot see,—  
That God is good sufficeth me."

Sorrows come to him, but he says, "It is good, because it is the Father's will." Death comes, and he lays his best loved friends away, and says, "The Father is working. His will is perfect." Age comes, and with it, weakness and enforced inactivity, but he grows old sweetly, and trusts still, saying

"I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care."

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Now what has his faith done for him? It has given him a new way of looking at things. Having new vision, he looks out upon a changed world. He has a view of things in the light of which sorrow ceases to be what the world counts it, and becomes a sacrament. Sickness, disappointment, calumny, are transformed into means of grace. Good comes to him from every source. The whole universe is in league with him.

Do you not know that such a view of things will change the whole life of a man? Things are very much as we look at them. How much depends upon the way we look at things! Here are two men. One of them, when he drives a nail and hits his thumb will swear like a pirate. He will curse the nail, and curse the hammer, and curse his thumb, and curse all creation. The other, in the same event, will smile and say "I am just showing you how a woman drives nails." The one takes a journey, and has to wait at a railroad junction for an hour. Well he waits with a vengeance. He paces the platform like a caged hyena. "Just my luck!" he growls. "What are railroads for anyhow, I'd like to know? Why can't they arrange to make some sort of a connection? Blame the railroads!" The other sits down and waits. He reflects: "It is better to wait here than to get to my destination at five o'clock in the morning." He remembers when he was traveling this way before, and the train for the North was late, the time of this train just suited him. He knows that the railroad systems of the country, on the whole, are

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tolerably well managed as to train connections. Things are working together for good, even if he has to wait an hour or two. The one loses his fortune, and becomes morose and gloomy. He rails at the current commercial code, and at the government, and at the social system, and at his fellow men. The other sees the fortune of a life-time swept away, and staggers under the blow, and then recovers his equilibrium, and says: "I am a bankrupt merchant, but I need not be a bankrupt man. There is much to live for yet. I have my family, and my country, and my church. I can show the world how happy a man may be, and how useful he may be, after he has suffered the loss of all his money." What is the difference between the men? A difference of vision, that is all. A difference of faith. But it makes all the difference between a small man and a great man, a citizen of the world and a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. If religion does this for a man, if it gives him the habit of looking for the good in everything, it is the best gift of God.

But is there nothing in providence? Is there nothing in prayer? Is not God pledged to help His people, to deliver them in hours of danger, and to interpose in their behalf? Surely He is. His Word is honeycombed with promises which assure us of His special care. But let us rid ourselves of some errors:—Let us get rid of the notion that God intervenes in our behalf only in what is extraordinary. We classify events as natural and supernatural. But we should remember that they are

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our terms and not God's. The natural and supernatural are alike to Him. If I am sick and medicine cures me, God is in that cure as certainly as though no medicine had been used. He uses means. He employs secondary causes. A ship at sea suffers an accident to its steering gear, and drifts about helplessly for a day and a night. The passengers pray. Relief comes. And people say, "That was providential." But a thousand ships sail the seas and suffer no accident. Is there no providence in that? God works by ordinary, as well as by extraordinary, means.

Another error is the idea that God intervenes in our behalf only when we are granted the desires of our hearts. And in that idea we share the atheism of the man who chooses his own good. And how often have we to be reminded that God could not be more cruel, more unkind to us, than just to give us what we think is good. Hear the testimony of a saint of God: "I have lived to thank God a thousand times that He did not answer all my prayers."

Then if we love God, we must consult the good of others more than our own advantage. Many a man has been denied the dearest desire of his heart, and has never fully understood why the denial, but the Father has understood. It was for the benefit of others. So the world thanks God for the banishment of St. John, and the imprisonment of "the tinker of Bedford." The world thanks God for the blindness of Milton, the homelessness of John Howard Payne, and the invalidism of Frances Rid-

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ley Havergal. The world thanks God for the poverty of Oliver Goldsmith and of Abraham Lincoln. And we may yet thank God for withholding what we think Him cruel not to give, and for withdrawing what we think Him unkind to have taken from us.

"Sometime, when all life's lessons have been learned,  
When sun and moon forevermore have set,  
The lessons our weak judgments here have spurned,  
O'er which we sat and grieved with lashes wet,  
Shall flash before us out of life's dark night  
As stars shine most in deepest tints of blue,  
And we shall see how all God's plans were best,  
And how what seemed reproof was love most true."



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"Emerson's assertion that 'it is the fine souls who serve us, and not what is called fine society,' is a refreshing assurance to fall back upon; for when life degenerates into an idolatry of the senses, a worship of material good, and is controlled only by the sovereignty of selfishness, its divine aim is irrevocably lost unless some achievement in the line of duty or sacrifice shall restore it to the sphere of high thought." —LILIAN WHITING.

*The World Beautiful.* Pages 97, 98.

\* \* \* \* "His love did feed  
The loveless; and His gentle hands did lead  
The blind, and lift the weak, and balm the smart  
Of other wounds than rankled at the dart,  
In His own breast that gloried thus to bleed."

—JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY. *John Brown.*

"Reflect that life, like every other blessing,  
Derives its value from its use alone."

—SAMUEL JOHNSON. *Irene.*

## XI.

### What Life Consists Of.

TEXT—"For a man's life consisteth not of the abundance of the things which he possesseth."—Luke 12: 15.

The chapter which contains the text gives us the story of a rather remarkable incident. Jesus was preaching, or teaching, (for all his sermons were lessons in practical theology), when suddenly He was interrupted. He had just said, "The Holy Ghost shall teach you what ye shall say," when one of the company cried out, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." Jesus had said nothing about inheritances of land or money, nothing about property rights. His theme was of lofty spiritual things. The interruption showed what one man was thinking about. His mind was absorbed with considerations infinitely removed from religion. (Not the first instance of preoccupation in worship, nor the last instance of the kind, either.) But the Great Teacher took the interruption patiently. He simply disclaimed the office of arbiter or referee in law, and administered a gentle rebuke in these words: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not of the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Then followed the parable of the rich man who would build greater barns, but to whom God said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." The lesson was a salutary one for

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that age and for this. For all ages are alike in one respect—they have not rightly estimated the worth of material things; they have had false views of life, of its meaning and chief end.

In the text, Christ boldly strikes at the fundamental error of all ages, which is that the fullness of a man's life may be measured by the abundance of the things which he possesseth. He does not say here what is the measure of life's completeness, what life at its best consists of, but He says what it does not consist of, and by simply turning men's eyes away from that which has occupied the whole sphere of their vision, He opens up before them a great field for reflection and experiment.

And yet he does not leave the matter wholly to experiment, for if a man is anxious to find what life on the highest level consists of, he will find something positive in this: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

For nothing are we under greater obligation to Christianity than for this, that it so corrects the common and current definition of life that no man who comes within the scope of its direct influence can have the same view of life after as before. It is no violence to truth to call a Christian a new creature, for though he is the same personality in the same body, he has new feelings, new ideals, and new relations. And feelings, ideals, and relations make up about three-thirds of life.

## What Life Consists Of.

Here then are the two doctrines of life we find among men. The first is this: The purpose of life is to get, to keep, to have. That is most valuable which is most real. The most real things are those you can see, and hold, and lock up in the safe. No man begins to live until he learns the value of money. He lives the largest life who accumulates the most money. To live and die with only a little money is to live a little life.

And this is the other: The purpose of life is to develop the highest powers. The highest faculties are not developed by contact with the visible. No man begins to live until he learns the value of other things than money. It is possible to live a large life on little capital. He lives the largest life who has the greatest resources of satisfaction. To live and die with nothing but money is to live in vain.

Have we not met these doctrines, and do we not meet them every day? Are they not our doctrines? Are we not living under one or other of them at this moment? Are we not often confused, living under one to-day and the other to-morrow?

O let us get the right idea of life and adhere to it. Let us settle in our minds once for all what life, the best life, consists of, and strive to realize that.

Now there is nothing in Christianity which prohibits or discourages the accumulation of property. But there is much to regulate the objects for which it is amassed. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." That is, the end must not be a selfish one. There is much in Christianity to regu-

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late the distribution of property. But, while there is nothing in Christianity to prohibit or discourage the possession of riches, there is much to teach men that life is not enlarged by possession alone. That is one way to live, but it is not the best way, the worthiest way, the blesseddest way. A man who lives only in the world of business, whose interests and sympathies and activities are there, and there alone, has no variety of life, no breadth, no horizon. Whatever his income may be, his real resources are small. He is like a squirrel in a cage. He may be active enough, he has his little wheel to turn, but he has voluntarily fettered his highest faculties.

How many men there are who are living that kind of a life! Such a man has bounded his universe by his business faculties. The newspapers have nothing to interest him outside of the stock quotations. Any kind of a book is a bore, except it be a bank-book. He cares nothing for high art. Nature is nothing to him, save as she ministers to his bodily needs. He would not travel a mile to see a ravishing landscape. His wife goes to church for him, and if he asks "What did the preacher talk about?" and the wife replies, "About Joseph's brethren going down into Egypt for corn," he inquires instinctively, "Did he say what corn was worth down there?"

What are the sources of his joy? They are exclusively financial. What the sources of his strength? They are exclusively physical—"soft shelled crabs and reed-birds, salads and cham-

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pagne." It would be no great loss to him if all the libraries and all the art galleries and all the churches in the land were suddenly destroyed. He would miss nothing. It would be no great loss to him if he were suddenly transformed into an apopleptic spider plotting and scheming to capture and keep all the flies that come his way, or a plant with capacity only to eat and drink. Talk about resources—he has none aside from "the abundance of things which he possesseth," and if by the fluctuations of fortune they vanish, he is undone. He has lived his life, he had only material relations to the universe, and with their destruction he is destroyed.

Now what is the remedy for this? To cry down commerce? Shut up our shops? Silence the song of spindles? Scuttle our ships? Quench our factory fires? Live in peaceful improvidence? No. But, over against the maxim, "No man begins to live until he learns the value of money," put the maxim, "No man begins to live until he learns the value of other things than money." Add to the negative "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth," these positives:

A man's life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he knoweth. I was once the guest, for a little time, of a man who owned a magnificent art gallery. But he could say more than "I have these pictures." He could say "I know them." He had a marvellous pipe organ in his house. But he could say more than "I have the

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organ." He could say "I know the organ, I know its sweetness and its power." Some men are content to say "I have this, that, and the other beautiful thing." He is not—he says, "These books—I know them; these flowers—I know them, they seem to me like children, they have a speech that is all their own, and I understand it."

By the things we know, our reason is enriched, and we are to live in our reason. We are to know the meaning of things, for "the meaning of things is no less substantial than the things themselves." We are to know the things below us—that is power. We are to know the things about us—that is culture. We are to know the things above us—that is character.

Moreover, a man's life consisteth in the abundance of things he loveth. What capacity for happiness in the man who has the disposition to be delighted with little things. The man who loves to hear a skylark's song is rich. It may be denied him to hear Patti or Melba, but he has his concerts that kings might envy. The man who loves the common flowers of the forest and field is rich. He has no expensive conservatory, but he has acres of daisies and hawthorn. Blessed is the man who loves such things. He is never poor; he is never alone.

Walt Whitman was a strange man. He may have been a degenerate. But his degeneracy had genius in it, and he left a name that will never die. He said once, "I love God and flowers and little children." Was there any such thing as bank-

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ruptcy for him? Not so long as God sits upon His throne, and flowers spring up in every meadow, and little children smile. Whitman was poor, but he lived an abundant life, for his inner resources were inexhaustible.

And we must not forget that a man's life consisteth in the abundance of things that a man doeth. One secret of a blessed life is always to be busy. I am thinking of a woman I once knew, a type of the womanhood described in the last chapter of Proverbs. Her time was always employed with some scheme by which somebody was to be helped or made happy. She had no children of her own to work for—hers were in heaven—but it was her joy to send a Christmas box to the neighbour's boy away at school, or to pack a barrel for a missionary on the frontier, or to prepare delicacies for a sick neighbour, or to do something to make more beautiful the little church in which she worshiped. She was not rich except in good works, but the Lord multiplied the little she had, and there is not a millionaire's wife in the world whose charities are more varied or more widely diffused than hers were. She had learned the secret of living to labor for others. I suppose there are cynics who say, "It might be interesting to inquire if her husband was always well fed, and if his shirt buttons were always in their proper place." I must disappoint such cynics, and tell you that no guest in that little house—and it was exceedingly hospitable, ever found it anything but clean, and sweet, and pleasant. I speak of her only to suggest how life may

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consist of the abundance of one's labor. Not possession, but knowledge, love, labor, make life complete. The life we live depends upon the things we live for, not the things we live by, nor the things we live in.

Elihu Burritt was a blacksmith, but he lived the life of a scholar. Edmund Clarence Stedman is a banker, but he lives the life of a poet. And we may be cooks, or clerks, or coal-heavers, and live the lives of thinkers, lovers of truth and beauty, doers of God's will.

"Forenoon, and afternoon, and night !—forenoon  
And afternoon, and night !—Forenoon, and—what ?  
The empty song repeats itself. No more ?  
Yea, and that is Life : make this forenoon sublime,  
This afternoon a Psalm, this night a Prayer,  
And Time is conquered, and thy crown is won."

O God, lead us by Thy Spirit into the most abundant life. Over against the souls we are, show us the souls we ought to be, the souls we are to be when we learn to follow Jesus Christ more closely and more constantly. Bless those of us who have abundant treasures of the world. May we so use them as to enrich the lives of others and our own inner life. Bless those of us whose visible treasures are few. May our souls be laden with faith and hope and joy. So shall we be rich unto thee. Amen.

Christianity and Woman.

“ You forget too much  
That every creature, female as the male,  
Stands single in responsible act and thought,  
As also in birth and death.”

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

*Aurora Leigh.*

“ A lady with a lamp shall stand  
In the great history of the land,  
A noble type of good,  
Heroic womanhood.”

—LONGFELLOW. *Santa Filomena.*

“The attitude of Christianity towards the external conditions of mankind was not that of a disturbing and subversive force, but it deprived evil of all justification for its permanent continuance. It did not forthwith abolish the slavery which it found existing, but in summoning all men to partake in the kingdom of God, it condemned it nevertheless. At first it let polygamy continue where it existed; but this must necessarily disappear where the spirit of Christian faith made itself felt in all relations of life.”

—HERMANN LOTZE. *Microcosmus.*

## XII.

### Christianity and Woman.

TEXT—"Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee."—Mark 5: 19.

The story of the text is a familiar one. Jesus, full of pity for all pain, and compassion for all distress, had wrought a great miracle. There was a man so deranged, depraved, or both, that he had become an alien to his mother's children, an out-cast from home. He dwelt among the tombs, his only companions lepers and wild beasts. The Great Physician healed him. He was always doing that. Beneath the filth and rags, the matted hair and frothy lip, Christ saw the other man, the man He came to seek and save.

Clothed and in his right mind, the demoniac was prompted by very gratitude to follow his new-found friend and benefactor. But Jesus bade him shew himself to those who best knew his former condition—his own family and kindred—and tell them how great things the Lord had done for him.

Separating these words from their historic connection, they apply to every soul that has been redeemed from sin. After I have been cleansed and forgiven—what? "Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." "Go and tell"—that is the evangelistic command; gratitude—that is the evangelistic motive.

What is true of individuals is true of classes. The mission of the Son of Man was primarily to

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regenerate human hearts, and by that means, ultimately, to regenerate society, government, and all human relations. As the Gospel has prevailed in the world, social conditions have changed. Witness the almost universal abolition of slavery. We may very appropriately say to an emancipated bondman, "Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." The expanding spirit of Christian philanthropy is responsible for the multiplication of asylums for the defective and refuges for the unfortunate. So that we may say to the blind boy who is receiving a liberal education, or to the homeless girl who has found a mother in the matron of an orphanage, "Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Since the Man of Nazareth pushed a plane and swung a hammer, there has been a growing conception of the true dignity of labor.

"The tanned face garlanded with mirth,  
It hath the kingliest smile on earth,  
The swart brow, diamonded with sweat,  
Hath never need of a coronet."

Christ laid His toilsome life athwart a civilization which held only three occupations to be honorable, and that "the gains of hired workmen are ignoble, that all handicraftsmen are engaged in vulgar business; nor can a workshop have in it anything suitable to a gentleman." We may say to the modern laborer with the crown of manhood on his brow, "Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Since Jesus took little children into His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them, childhood has been cherished with a

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tenderness and nurtured with a passion that has its strongest inspiration in His words who said, "Who-so shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me." We may say to the child whose lips are just learning to fashion the language of love, "Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee."

A pre-eminent example of the social effects of Christianity is seen in the improved condition of womanhood. Consider what the Gospel has done for woman, and you will feel the force of the text as applied to her, "Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." It is true, woman has not yet adequate protection and perfect liberty, even in Christian countries, but compared with the esteem in which her sex was held before the leaven of Christianity had begun to penetrate society, and with the treatment she receives in lands to which the Gospel is still unknown, she is as a queen to a slave.

In Greece, that Greece immortalized by the poetry of Homer, the art of Phidias, the philosophy of Plato, and the oratory of Demosthenes, woman was held in such contempt that the greatest Hellenic orator commended the wisdom of the law of Solon which declared, "All acts shall be null and void which are done by anyone under the influence of a woman."

In Athens, "the Eye of Greece, Mother of arts and eloquence," for a woman to be educated was to publish her unchastity. She could purchase learning only at the cost of character. It was Aristotle

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who wrote: "Both a woman and a slave may be good; though perhaps of these, the one is less good, and the other is wholly bad." Plutarch expressed the conviction of the heathen world when he said: "A wife should have no friends but those of her husband, and no gods but those her husband adores."

According to the primitive laws of the Romans woman was under a perpetual guardianship, never having legal authority over her own children, and husbands exercised the jurisdiction of life and death. She was a chattel, and not a soul. While the severe injustice of early laws was mitigated under the later emperors, yet the Voconian law, which permitted no registered citizen of more than moderate means to make a woman his heir, continued in practical operation even under the Caesars. It seems to have been one of the fundamental principles of Roman law that a woman must not claim independence.

If there lingers a trace of that idea in Christendom, it is not one of the results of Christianity, but a residuum of heathenism. From the first the Christian church gave woman a place of dignity and honor. The Savior admitted woman to His discipleship. He took time, even when thirsty and tired, to teach a woman, and a Samaritan at that, the nature of His spiritual kingdom. A woman was the first Christian convert in Europe. Women were among Paul's fellow laborers. We read in the sixth chapter of Acts about the selection and ordination of deacons. To this, or to an equivalent

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office, women were admitted, as is evident from the first verses of the sixteenth chapter of Romans: "I commend unto you Phebe, a deaconess of the church which is in Cenchrea; that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you." What an illustrious group the women of the New Testament compose. Rome had some noble matrons; there were Arria, Fannia, the wife of Macrinus, of whom Pliny writes, and Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi. But neither Rome nor Greece ever gave the world such ideals as we find in these: the three Marys, the first of whom was also the first of women, the mother of a new-born race, for she cradled in her arms the Son of God; Martha, Johanna, Salome, Dorcas, Priscilla, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Lois and Eunice, some companions of our Lord, others of the Apostles.

It may be that Jesus spoke no direct word in behalf of the liberation of woman, nevertheless, the effect of his example and that of His Apostles in their attitude toward woman, was both immediate and immense. It was an observation of Libanius, the pagan teacher of Basil and Chrysostom, when he saw the mothers and sisters of his scholars, "What women these Christians have!" So it has been wherever the truths of Christianity are recognized, that woman is honored, protected and permitted to exercise her independent will, in a degree that other nations neither practice nor allow.

What of womanhood in China? Why, if Christianity did nothing among all the myriads of that

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empire but relieve the physical suffering of women, the spirit of pure humanitarianism would obligate us to continue our missionary enterprises there. The first step in the education of a Chinese girl in a Christian school is not to teach her the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, or the Catechism; it is to unbind her feet. I doubt if we who have never seen the process of feet-binding can understand the monstrous cruelty of the operation. It begins in infancy and continues for years, daily subjecting its victims to pain that can only be expressed in tears. Christianity in China protests against that ancient barbarism, and Jesus Christ is saying to many a woman there just what He said to one He had healed long, long ago, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." But the Gospel is doing more than that for woman in the East. It is emancipating her from fetters, and debasement as profound as that which characterized Roman womanhood in the early ages. It is saving her from the unutterable curse of infant betrothal. A recent writer mentions the case of a girl who was legally bound to a maniac, body and soul, for life, beyond her power to prevent. Their law considers woman always a minor, gives a husband almost limitless power over his wife, and offers her no career save as a doll or drudge. Oh, Christian women, have you not a message for your sisters there? Does He not say to you who know the priceless liberty of a Christ-enfranchised womanhood, "Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee?"

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The curse of womanhood in India is child-marriage and child-widowhood. The age of consent in British India has only recently been changed from ten to twelve years, and when the Government sought to advance it to fourteen, the natives objected so forcibly that the proposition failed. There are 600,000 widows in India under nineteen years of age, whom the code of a cruel caste system forbids to remarry; 200,000 of these are under fourteen, and 78,000 are under nine! Infant widowhood! A girl is a widow if the man to whom her parents betrothed her dies, even though she may never have seen his face. It is not strange that a woman who knew the heritage of heathen women said, "I would like to look at Jesus through the eyes of Moses, David, Daniel; better still, of Peter, Paul, or John; but best of all, through the eyes of a converted heathen woman who, by His revelation of Himself to her soul, has been lifted out of the horrible pit and miry clay of her helpless and hopeless state, unwelcome at birth, untaught in childhood, enslaved as a wife, accursed as a widow, and unmourned when dead."

I have barely suggested what Christianity has done for woman. Now what has woman done for Christianity? Surely her sense of benefits received impels her to service. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." Has woman's work been commensurate with her obligation? The uniform testimony of Christian history is that woman has been the best servant and most faithful follower of Christ.

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The introduction of feminine character and life into early Christianity gave a force and fervency to the whole movement. The church is the appointed instrument of God in the evangelization of the world, and woman has ever been, and still is, the heart of the church as she is the conscience of the race. She is the numerical majority of the church.

"She while apostles shrank could dangers brave,  
Last at the cross and earliest at the grave."

To her is given all too exclusively the office of training the children in morals and religion. And right well has she performed her part. The most of that large number of men whose lives and labors adorn the pages of Christian history were inspired to holiness by Christian women. Think of Timothy, to whom Paul wrote: "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother, Eunice." Think of St. Augustine, whose mother, Monica, followed him like an angel, with tears and prayers, and on long journeys, until, at last, his impassioned soul became a willing captive to the Christ of God. Prof. Swing, in his charming essay on "Augustine and his Mother," remarks that "in the lives of three most illustrious personages—Christ and Aurelius and Augustine—the nearest being to each one was the mother." I never think of Luther without thinking of his wife, the queenly Catherine, at his side, comforting him when faith was low and hope was dim. So long as the names of John and Charles Wesley are remem-

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bered, the world will not forget that strong, sweet, cultured mother, our Christian Cornelia, whose jewels were, one, the theologian, the other, the psalmist of Methodism.

But the influence of Christian womanhood has not always been indirect. She has not always spoken only through her children. She has herself been a publisher of good tidings. Catherine Booth was not only "the Mother of the Salvation Army;" she took her place beside her husband as a joint leader of the host. That was a splendid tribute to her services as a Christian worker when, at her funeral, 60,000 people viewed her remains in five days. Penitents knelt there as at the Cross, to pray for pardon and deliverance from sin, and a woman who stopped so long at the coffin that an officer said "Move on," replied, "Let others move on, I have come a hundred miles to see the face of the woman who led my son to Christ!"

You are familiar with the names of the faithful witnesses enumerated in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. There are some women in the number—Sarah, Rahab and the mother of Moses. But a modern chapter of that kind would contain many more. By faith Elizabeth Gurney Fry promoted prison reform in Europe and preached the Gospel to them that were bound. By faith Barbara Heck stirred up the sleeping conscience of a backslidden local preacher to hold the first Methodist service in America. By faith Mother Stewart started the temperance crusade which swept over the States like a sacred fire. By faith Frances Willard led

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the hosts of White Ribbon reformers whose battle cry is "For God and Home and Native Land." By faith, Lucy Rider Meyer began the deaconess work in American Methodism, which is destined to exert an influence in the church such as only they can understand who are acquainted with the deaconess institutions at Kaiserwerth in Germany and at Mildmay in London.

And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of Madam Guyon, and of Maria Fox, and of Lady Huntingdon, and of Sister Dora, and of Anne Mackenzie; of Fidelia Fisk also, and of Dorothea Dix, and of Mrs. Judson and Josephine Butler, and of Hannah Whitall Smith, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens;—(of whom the world was not worthy)." They were evangelists, philanthropists, missionaries. What of the multitude of women who are toiling in foreign lands to-day, enlightening heathen darkness with the consuming zeal of their own sacrifice? What of the heroism of that graduate of Vassar, the gifted daughter of a judge of our own State, who went to Japan to teach? She was offered a fine government position as an instructor if she would promise to teach secular branches only. Thrice the offer was made and thrice refused until she was given full consent and protection to teach the faith of Christ. What of the spirit of Sarah

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Hosmer, who lived in an attic and was a seamstress, yet who gave fifty dollars on six different occasions to educate native preachers in India? And of Rebecca Cox, of Galway, New York, who left a legacy of eight hundred dollars to the Baptist Woman's Missionary Society, all earned by weaving carpets? What of Harriet Newell and Emily Judson, and Mary Reed? What of the Zenana workers, and medical missionaries, who are preaching the Gospel and healing the sick, as Jesus did? They have heard the voice of the world's Savior across the centuries saying, "Go and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." And many have gone, promptly obedient to the words of Christ, and gladly responsive to the cry of human need. They are breathing the air of pestilence and death, facing perils and daring martyrdom. Some of them will die there. Some will come home to rest and return again. Some will come in broken health never to return to their chosen fields. We are honored occasionally by the presence of such among us.

I have seen a picture called "The Salute to the Wounded." It represents a group of mounted officers baring their heads as a line of wounded soldiers passes by. Let the church salute these returned missionaries who have been wounded in their well sustained conflict in foreign fields. And through them, let us salute every laborer in heathen lands, especially those who, by reaching women, are observing the military maxim, "Strike at the centers of power." Christianize the women of to-day, and

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the children of to-morrow will be won for Christ.

“Go tell American Christians,” said a dying heathen who had found in the Gospel a hope of immortality, “that we shall be their reward.” Yes; they shall be our reward—they and He upon whose arm we lean in life, upon whose bosom we recline in death, and whose face we shall behold in glory.

**Children's Rights.**

“Better to be driven out from among men than to be disliked of children.”

—R. H. DANA. *The Idle Man.*

“Children are the keys of Paradise;  
They alone are good and wise,  
Because their thoughts, their very lives are prayer.”

—R. H. STODDARD. *The Children's Prayer.*

“Let us live, therefore, in the hope that ere long there will come to children a glorious Renaissance of the Natural, when they will no more be fed with formulas and made to learn so many improving things. Childhood is short enough at the very best; the dreams of children vanish all too soon; the facts of life confront them grimly while the baby look still lingers in their eyes; and surely he is no real lover of his kind who would begrudge them this one small corner of delight (picture-books) and enter in with sullen tread to mar the heaven that lies about us in our infancy.”

—HARRY THURSTON PECK.

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### XIII.

## Children's Rights.

**TEXT**—"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. 18: 10.

Since the Fourth of July, 1776, we have heard much about Man's Rights. The opening sentences of the Declaration of Independence contain these words, "All men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; to secure these rights governments are instituted among men." The principles embodied in these statements are at the foundation of our Republic. The American Revolution, and the French Revolution, the two movements which have had much to do with the spread of democratic ideas, both belong to the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century may be spoken of as Man's Century, for in it the doctrine of the rights of man developed commanding strength.

The nineteenth century has done much to confirm man's rights, but more to secure the inalienable rights of woman. At the beginning of the present century but two occupations were open to woman. They were housekeeping and sewing. At the close of the century, there is hardly any profession which women are not free to enter. Harriet Hosmer fought for the right of a woman to be a sculptor; Rosa Bonheur for the right of a woman to be a painter; Elizabeth Cady Stanton for the

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right of a woman to be a public speaker; Lucy Stone for the right of a woman to be a lawyer. The fight is over, and it is generally, if not universally, acknowledged that woman has a right to do anything or be anything for which the Creative Powers gave her capacity. Let the nineteenth century therefore go into history as Woman's Century.

What shall the twentieth century be? What great movement shall distinguish it? Some say it will be the Workingman's Century. And it may be. And it should be. Yet there are indications that it will be more particularly distinguished for another thing. From the increasing care for childhood, from the growing popularity of improved methods of primary education, from the multiplication of agencies designed to guard and guide child-nature, it seems as if we were about to cross the threshold of the Children's Century.

The words of the text from the lips of the Son of Man suggest the theme, "Children's Rights." How tender His love, how beautiful His thoughtfulness, for children. Childhood has never been the same since He said "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." Childhood outside of Christendom is not the childhood we know. It is a very common observation of travelers in heathen lands that the children have almost no childhood. (Japan alone is an exception to the rule.) A Caucasian woman remarked upon seeing a Hindu baby "How old it looks." And a woman missionary friend, who heard her, said, "My dear, Hindu children all look that way. They are born

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old, old with the inheritance of the poverty and suffering of their race." To understand that you have only to know that, as Bishop Thoburn has said, "Millions of Hindu children go to bed hungry every night."

The Gospel of Christ is a Gospel of men's rights, and women's rights, and children's rights. In proportion as it is understood and practiced, every human being comes into his inheritance of natural rights, slaves are freed, women are exalted, children are cherished. The pledge that the twentieth century shall see a better recognition of children's rights, is in the better understanding of the pervasiveness and inclusiveness of Christianity. Thus far, the term "children's rights" may have suggested nothing very definite to you. Therefore, let me enumerate a few of the inalienable rights of a child—any child, your child, the child of the ghetto, or the child of the street.

First of all a child has the right to be well born. I do not know just what that term suggests to you. To one it may suggest blue blood, to another wealth, but I mean neither of these. I do not say high-born, but well-born. And I mean all that is included in a healthy body, veins free from the "taint of blood" that Tennyson speaks of, a good degree of brain capacity, and a clean name.

The percentage of children who come into the world with some bodily or mental deficiency is larger than we think. They enter life's race heavily handicapped. What chance does a man with a pain-racked body stand beside a man whose

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organism is so perfect that to breathe is a luxury? Fortunately, bodily deficiencies are sometimes more than counterbalanced by mental vigor, so that, after all, "the lame take the prey." It was so with Samuel Johnson who was scrofulous and almost blind, and who was so poor that when he was a student at Oxford he blacked boots for a crust of bread. But with hero-will he trod the path of penury and came in time to stand before kings. It was so with Alexander Stephens. He was so diminutive, and thin, and consumptive in appearance, that when he first came to Washington as a member of Congress the hackmen confidently counted on at least one "Congressional funeral" during that session. But he disappointed them, and pushed off death until he distinguished himself by a lifetime of active statesmanship.

More than health, more than a fighting chance for life, is the inheritance of a clean name. That means moral health. A good many men have made shipwreck of honor trying to amass money for their children. An old man said to me the other day, "I haven't much money but what I have is good money." He meant by that that his gold was neither red with blood, nor salt with tears, as too much gold is. Fathers do not owe it to their children to leave them a large patrimony, but they do owe it to transmit to them an honorable name.

Furthermore, a child has a right to his childhood. I do not know that this requires especial emphasis here. I alluded to it in speaking of the childhood among heathen people. In China the

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curse of childhood is foot-binding. The first five or six years of a girl's life are a continual agony. In India, there is the unspeakable horror of child-marriage and child-widowhood. And in all the older civilizations where the population is dense, a boy passes out of infancy into manhood without the intermediate period of joyful play, because he barely begins to live until there is borne in upon him from every side the rugged necessity of a struggle for existence.

If you will go among the submerged tenth of our great cities you will find that childhood is something more barren and burdened than you have imagined. Think of a childhood without even a sight of a green field, or a boundless forest, or a rolling river—a childhood spent within the narrow limits of a tenement court, or a crowded street, over which a hundred factories pour their clouds of smoke, eclipsing the sun by day and the stars by night.

Forty years ago tender children were factory slaves in England. Then Elizabeth Barrett Browning sang a song which is equalled for pathos only by Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt." It was:

"Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
Ere the sorrow comes with years?  
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers  
And *that* cannot stop their tears.  
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;  
The young birds are chirping in the nest;  
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;  
The young flowers are blowing toward the west;  
But the young, young children, O my brothers!  
They are weeping bitterly.  
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
In the country of the free.

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"Do you question the young children in the sorrow,  
Why their tears are falling so?  
The old man may weep for his to-morrow  
Which is lost in long ago;  
The old tree is leafless in the forest;  
The old year is ending in the frost;  
The old wound, is stricken, is the sorest;  
The old hope is hardest to be lost:  
But the young, young children, O my brothers!  
Do you ask them why they stand  
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers  
In our happy Fatherland?

"They look up with their pale and sunken faces:  
And their looks are sad to see,  
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses  
Down the cheeks of Infancy.  
'Your old earth,' they say, 'is very dreary,'  
'Our young feet,' they say, 'are very weak:  
Few paces have we taken yet are weary,'  
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.  
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children;  
For the outside earth is cold,  
And we young ones stand without in our bewildering,  
And the graves are for the old.' "

Modern legislation has cured that evil to a good degree. But it will take something more than legislation to secure the liberal recognition of the rights of children to a natural childhood. It will take the persistent preaching and the patient practice of the Gospel which tells us,

"Where childhood needs thy love this morn,  
Lo, there is thy Redeemer horn."

It is at once the refinement of cruelty and the cruelty of refinement to thrust upon children the vain and artificial life of society. Have you not seen little boys trained to be beaux at ten, and girls to be belles before their dresses were lengthened to the leather? There is a hot-house process by

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which childhood is robbed of its naturalness and ingenuousness. Let a child be a child. Deliver us from an orator at four, or a prima donna at six. Deliver us from any type of culture which produces serious sages at seven, or any type of piety which produces sedate saints at eight. The Master's words are these, "Ye must become like little children or ye cannot see the Kingdom." Do not transpose the terms and say to children "Ye must become like old folks to enter the Kingdom." Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones.

Another inalienable right of every child is a good education. We have about outgrown the idea that education is the peculiar privilege of the classes. We have come to see that the permanence of our political institutions depends upon the intelligence of our citizenship. A monarchy or an oligarchy may not require the wide diffusion of knowledge, but it is not so of a democracy. Fortunately, too, we have about outgrown the early idea of education, which made it consist of the training of the mind alone. A mind stored with knowledge does not constitute education. A man may be a prize scholar, a "double first" in the university, a very prodigy of learning, and be no more than was James I, who was called "the wisest fool in Christendom." Of another it was said, "He could speak a dozen languages, but could not speak intelligently in one." And of another, who though a Master of Arts, made nothing of his education, "He knew much of many things, all of a few

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things, but next to nothing about himself." Ah, this is the first consideration in a rational plan of education—self-knowledge, which leads to self-reverence, and self-reverence, which leads to self-control.

The training of the mind is much, but it is not all of education. There must be a training of the senses, of the emotions, of the affections, of the will, of the spirit. I am not saying that all this is the function of the public school. Part of it is, and part belongs to the Church, but much of it—indeed the most of it—is the function of the home, particularly the training of the will.

A boy said to his father, "I don't want to, and that's why I won't." He replied "You don't want to, and that is why you shall." The training of the will is what we call moral discipline, and there is nothing in which American youths are more deficient than this. Do you know why so large a number of the seamen in our Navy are foreigners? Admiral Porter said, "It is because the average American youth is incapable of discipline."

I claim it as one of the rights of childhood to be educated to do what ought to be done, just because of the moral force of that "ought." There is splendid inspiration in the lines Emerson wrote:—

"So close is glory to our dust,  
So nigh is God to man,  
When Duty whispers low 'Thou must,'  
The youth replies 'I can.'"

Give a child a good birth, a sound body, a clean name, a mind trained in the observation of facts and forces, a heart set to love the things that are

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lovely, and a will to do what he commands himself to do—what more is needed to equip him for this life and the life to come? A rightly nourished spirit. Conscience and courage do not make a man, unless you give to both terms the deepest possible significance—conscience enlightened by the Word of God, and courage born of a conviction that the visible is but a small part of the real. Froebel, who has been rightly called the Apostle of Childhood, says, "The care of the life of a child's inner and higher feeling and ideas belongs to the most delicate and yet the most important part of his nature. From it springs all and develops all that is highest and noblest in the life of the individual and the race, and ultimately all religious life which is at one with God in disposition, thought and deed."

What cruelty to withhold from childhood the education that leads out the thought to God! What a dwarfed and stunted soul is his who has been taught everything but reverence! More than any other sense this needs to be developed in impressionable years—not merely reverence for goodness in the abstract, but for supreme goodness as wrought out on earth by Jesus Christ. Teach a child the beauty of that peerless life, the fact—not the philosophy—of that atoning death, and he will come in time to see how faith in Christ takes hold on immortality, how fellowship with Him makes human life divine.

In a dim way, it may be, but in a way that grows clear and strong as the years roll by, children may

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be taught the duty and blessedness of worship, the nature and privilege of prayer, the pre-eminent place of the Bible in the world's literature and in the guidance of life, and the beauty of living by faith above the world and sin.

A distinguished American literary woman, when she looked into the eyes of her first-born child, exclaimed, "Almighty God, help me—Thou hast put into my care an immortal soul!" When parents and teachers come to realize that—that there are not only little bodies to clothe, and little minds to educate, but little souls to train, little souls to build up into great souls, true souls, God-fearing and Christ-following souls, they will fall to praying the prayer of Margaret Fuller Ossoli, "Help me, Almighty God."

O God, we beseech Thee grant Thy grace to all Thy servants, to whom Thou hast committed the culture and care of childhood. Endow them with the spirit which sees in every little child the angel-face, the angel-heart, the secret of the Kingdom of God. May those who labor in the Sunday School be led to see how great is their work and how divine the dignity Thou hast appointed to them—to feed Thy lambs. May they and all of us be fed with hidden food, manna from on high, bread that perisheth not. Amen.

The Inspiration of a Noble Life.

“ O poet-soldiers, ye who sing and fight !  
Nor pipe nor sword was ever lost in vain.  
New armies form. Retreating o'er Time's plain,  
Beside your graves they stand at last for Right,  
And none may say if poet's pen or sword,  
Win the best triumph grateful years record.”  
—F. W. GUNSAULUS. *Songs of Night and Day.*  
—“The Poet and the Soldier.”

“ The poet's day is different from another,  
Though he doth count each man his own heart's brother.  
So crystal clear the air that he looks through  
It gives each color an intenser hue ;  
Each bush doth burn, and every flower doth flame ;  
The stars are singing ; silence breathes a name ;  
The world wherein he wanders, dreams and sings,  
Thrills with the beating of invisible wings ;  
And all day long he hears from hidden birds  
The multitudinous pour of musicked words.”  
—RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

## XIV

### The Inspiration of a Noble Life.

TEXT—"And Elijah went up into heaven, and Elisha saw it, and he cried, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.' And he saw him no more. . . . And he took up the mantle of Elijah."—2 Kings 2: 11-14.

The picture presented by the text is full of dramatic action. Elijah has ended his labors under the sun, and vanishes from human view. He yields himself to the gravitation of a superior sphere and disappears into the opening sky. Below him stands Elisha, whom he has strangely called to follow him from the unfinished furrow, and in whose breast the prophetic fire has already begun to burn. To this young man has been granted the peerless privilege of fellowship with the elder. He knows the fineness, the virtue, the vigor of that life; he covets such manhood for himself, and with the splendid audacity of youth he even dares to pray for a double portion of Elijah's spirit to rest upon him.

Somewhat as in later ages the men of Galilee stood gazing into the heaven where their Lord had gone, stands this young man, following with eager eyes the ascending saint, and crying, "My father, my father!" Now he is gone. The light fades in the sky, and the young man rends his garments, takes up the mantle of Elijah, and goes back to stand upon the banks of Jordan. All this, and that which follows, is touching and beautiful. What follows? The recognition of the young man as the

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elder's spiritual legatee. The prayer of lofty faith is honored, and the sons of the prophets say, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha."

I go back into the centuries for this incident because it is so true a picture of the inspiration of a noble life. And this is my theme, suggested by the departure of the distinguished churchman, Bishop Arthur Cleveland Coxe. My heart impels me to lay this humble tribute on his grave, and testify my appreciation of his greatness, my admiration of his life.

At twenty-two minutes past seven o'clock on the morning of April 15th, 1865, the spirit of Abraham Lincoln passed away. As the calmness of death settled upon the martyr's furrowed face, Stanton turned away, exclaiming, "Now he belongs to the ages." And it is so. Let no man ask whether Lincoln was this or that, we only care to know that he was the representative American. As such no section or party can claim him. And so it is of all great men. In life they may have been Republicans or Democrats, Americans or Englishmen, but dead, they belong to humanity, to "the parliament of man, the federation of the world."

Yesterday Bishop Coxe belonged to the Protestant Episcopal Communion; now he belongs to the Church Universal. This was true of Phillips Brooks. While he lived, he was rector of Trinity Church, and Bishop of Massachusetts. But now he is numbered among the nobles of the world-wide, age-long Church, whose tongues have proclaimed, whose pens have celebrated, and whose lives have

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exemplified, the Christianity of Christ. As patriotism is broader than any party—than all the parties, so Christianity is larger than any creed—than all creeds.

It was not my privilege to call Bishop Coxe my friend. I met him personally only once, I heard him preach but once. Yet men are known beyond the circle of their intimates. Their words that live in books and songs, their works, their silent influence, the esteem in which they are held by their associates and by the community, which, after all, judges the worth of public men with tolerable accuracy—all these acquaint us with them. So, as I have observed his venerable form passing my door, I have thought of him as one I knew quite as well as some with whom I have clasped hands a hundred times, or journeyed for days. I have known him as a poet since my ministry began. As such, he is known even beyond the sea. As such, the Church will know him in time to come. As such, the Church is indebted to him.

So, though he was not my bishop, as a servant of God and follower of Christ, he was my brother, and as a gracious gentleman, efficient minister, and faithful shepherd of the flock committed to his care, a pattern. May I not, therefore, as I think of him with something of that reverence which Elisha had for the old prophet, covet some measure of the gifts by which he served his age so well, and cry "My father, my father?"

The inquiry may be pertinent, in view of much the press has said since Bishop Coxe's death, in

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view of this and services of similar character, Were it not better if we had spoken our sentiments of reverence and admiration while he was still among us? Are not eulogies in living hearts better than elegies on marble? Yes, but there exists a reason why some things could not be said of him when living, some things that we are saying now. The fact is we cannot know the real greatness of any man until he dies. We are so constituted that we are better fitted for reflection when observation ceases. The death of a man removes the scales of prejudice and of partisanship from our eyes, and enables us to see him in a clearer light. He has moved away from us, and we survey his work from a new viewpoint, a perspective more nearly approaching the divine. This truth has led to the saying that no man's life is well begun until he himself has become invisible.

How often what was said of Abel is true, that "he being dead yet speaketh." Thus Mrs. Browning says: "'Tis true that when the dust of death has choked a great man's voice, the common words he spoke turn oracles." Are there not sons and daughters who remember to-day the admonitory words of a father, the benediction of a mother's prayer, more vividly than the day after they were uttered? There is an earthly immortality of goodness. It was after Dorcas died, and they had washed her and laid her in an upper chamber, awaiting burial as they thought, but awaiting resurrection, as it proved—it was then the weeping widows showed the garments she had made while

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she was with them. "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

So, Bishop Coxe is as truly active to-day in this world as when he walked these busy streets, as when the churches of Western New York echoed his fervid eloquence. His gracious presence, his courtly manner, his cultured mind, his facile pen, his holy life, conspire to constitute a character calculated to produce in those who knew him, in those who knew him only transiently, a desire to be like him. This is the great power of such a life, to reproduce itself in others. Indeed this is the power of genius, the power to live again in those that follow, as Carlyle lives again in Ruskin and in Emerson, as Stephen lived again in Paul, and Paul in Timothy. Such is the power of a great painter like Rembrandt to live again in all the artists that study his masterpieces; of a great teacher like Arnold to live again in all his scholars; of a great preacher to live again in the lives of his hearers; of a great prophet to beget spiritual sons, exemplified to us in the relation of Elisha to Elijah, following him, learning of him, gazing after him, and crying "My father, my father." Fortunate the church that has such a bishop, and fortunate the congregations ministered to by Elishas who confess the fatherhood of such Elijahs.

Being dead, he speaketh. By his example, he speaks to every layman calling him to wear upon his breast "the white flower of a blameless life," and to every clergyman, calling him to be a priest at the

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altar, a minister in the congregation, a man everywhere. He speaks to scholars through the library of patristic literature he edited and annotated, by reading which we discover the thought of the centuries which closely followed the Apostolic age. And he speaks to the Church at large through his poetry, characterized by that which Cowper calls

"The poet's just pretence—  
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,  
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought."

Possibly next to the personal influence he exerted over those who knew him best and met him often, an influence necessarily limited, his power is greatest as a religious poet. He cannot be called a great poet. He wrote nothing colossal like Pollok's "Course of Time" or Tennyson's "In Memoriam." He did not give himself wholly to literature. He was a busy man, and very likely many of his verses are the fruit of hours in which he turned to letters for release from labors more severe. But he has given us some pleasing ballads, charming carols, and immortal hymns, and it is by the work of such men, as well as by the greater poets, that literature has been enriched. Of such poets as he James Russell Lowell writes:

"It may be glorious to write  
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three  
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight  
Once in a century:

"But better far it is to speak  
One simple word, which now and then  
Shall waken their free natures in the weak  
And friendless sons of men.

"To write some earnest verse or line.  
Which, seeking not the praise of art,  
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood shine  
In the untutored heart."

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Such earnest words he wrote. And they will live.  
There is that lyric in which the representatives of  
many churches voiced their hope and confidence at  
the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in 1873:

"O where are kings and empires now,  
Of old that went and came?  
But Lord, Thy Church is praying yet,  
A thousand years the same.

"We mark her goodly battlements,  
And her foundations strong,  
We hear within the solemn voice  
Of her unending song.

"For not like kingdoms of the world,  
Thy holy Church, O God,  
Though earthquake shocks are threatening her,  
And tempests are abroad—

"Unshaken as eternal hills,  
Immovable she stands,  
A mountain that shall fill the earth,  
A house not made with hands."

Greater still his trumpet-call to service:

"We are living, we are dwelling,  
In a grand and awful time,  
In an age on ages telling;  
To be living is sublime.  
Hark! the waking up of nations,  
Gog and Magog to the fray:  
Hark! What soundeth? Is creation  
Groaning for its latter day?

"Worlds are charging, heaven beholding,  
Thou hast but an hour to fight;  
Now the blazoned Cross unfolding,  
On, right onward for the right!  
On! let all the soul within you  
For the truth's sake go abroad!  
Strike, let every nerve and sinew  
Tell on ages, tell for God."

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This latter stirs one like Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" and Lowell's "Present Crisis." Other hymns he wrote, hymns of devotion, hymns of invitation, missionary hymns, hymns of faith, which have found a place in every considerable collection. By these he will be best remembered. And what better monument can a man have than that he has who sings one true and noble song? Said not the conqueror of Quebec, "I would rather be the author of Gray's Elegy than to be the leader of the troops that scale the heights of Abraham to-morrow?" Lucy Larcom says of one who plants a tree:

"He who plants a tree  
Plants a hope;  
Rootlets up through fibres blindly grope,  
Leaves unfold unto horizon free.  
So man's life must climb  
From the clods of time  
Unto heavens sublime.  
Canst thou prophesy, thou little tree  
What the glory of thy boughs shall be?"

"He who plants a tree,  
He plants love:  
Tents of coolness spreading out above  
Wayfarers he may not live to see.  
Gifts that grow are best  
Hands that bless are blest;  
Plant! Life does the rest.  
Heaven and earth helps him who plants a tree,  
And his work its own reward shall be."

If this is true of one who plants a tree, what blessing is the heritage of him who plants truth in human minds by singing songs of hope, of love, of trust, of duty, of faith in the unseen world, of the triumph of the divine order of things!

God gave Arthur Cleveland Coxe a rare poetic

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soul, a soul whose vision pierced the outward crust of things, and saw what others never see. This is what distinguished the old Hebrew psalmists, the farsight of the soul that sees through all the night the coming of the day, the fine sense of the ear that hears through all discord the one clear note that tells the harmony that is to come.

The poetic and oratorical faculties are akin. It takes something of the poet to make the orator. Because he was a poet, he was the more admirable orator. But we shall hear his trumpet tongue no more. We greet him in the Silent Land. Yet he is not silent there. The victor's shout, the saint's redemption song are his.



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“He who lives in the faith of Jesus Christ lives in the freest action of his mental powers, and sees before him and makes himself a part of the large world into which man shall enter, in which he has perfect liberty, and can exercise his powers as he could never have exercised them without. \* \* \* It is the truth that is to make us free, and the entrance of a man into that freedom is the largest freedom of every region of man's life.”

—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Sermon on “Thought and Action.”

“Life is a mission. Every other definition of life is false, and leads all who accept it astray. Religion, science, philosophy, though still at variance upon many points, all agree in this, that every existence is an aim.”

—MAZZINI. “Life and Writings.”

“We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love ;  
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,  
In dignity of being we ascend.”

—WORDSWORTH. *The Excursion.*

## XV.

### The Enlargement of Life.

TEXT.—“I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.”—John 10: 10.

The Jews of Palestine were a pastoral people. They tilled the soil, and gathered fruit, and kept their flocks. Of shepherds there were many among them. The sheep-fold was the commonest of sights—a low flat building on the sheltered side of a valley, with a yard or court surrounded by a stone wall. This wall was often wide enough to plant a row of thorn trees on the top, so that wolves and other beasts of prey might not disturb the flock. A beautiful sight it was to see a shepherd lead his flock forth from the fold at sunrise. He calls to them, and they hear his voice, and follow. If a stranger calls, they lift their heads in alarm and refuse to be led. But the shepherd's voice they know. And he leads them where the green pastures are, and where the cool and quiet waters flow. Then at sunset to see him lead them home again, over the hills and into the fold, where, secure, they rest until the morning comes again. Out of an experience like that, David wrote the twenty-third Psalm. In sight of some such flock or fold our Savior spoke the parable of the ninety and nine. And to a people who perfectly knew the shepherd life, he spoke the text. He was aware that wolves and mountain lions were not the only enemies of

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the flock. There were predatory bands of outlaws among the hills, and sometimes they would scale the wall of the sheep-fold in the night, and in the morning the practiced eye of the shepherd would perceive some missing—sheep or lambs. So the people knew the significance of this much of the parable at least: "The thief cometh to kill and steal and destroy." And the application of it immediately followed. The Savior said, "I am the Shepherd. The children of men are the sheep. I am come, not to fleece them, but to feed them; not to kill them, but to cure them; not to pen them in and lock them up, but to open the door and lead them out to fairer fields and sweeter streams than they ever knew. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

Now that you see the setting of the text, I leave the details of the parable, and ask you to consider only that part of its interpretation in which our Lord affirms that His mission to men is the enlargement of life. The heart of the whole parable is in this: Christ saw the poor, narrow, fettered, impoverished life of men, of man at his best—and pitied it, and sought to broaden, emancipate, and enrich it. He had in His purpose for all the race, a more abundant life.

Now I am not so foolish as to affirm that Christ was the only evangel of the enlargement of life. He was not "the first that ever burst into that silent sea." All the prophets of the Hebrew faith, and all the philosophers of the classic world, and all the dreamers of the East—Isaiah and Socrates and

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Buddha—were moved with compassion for the littleness of man, and sought to broaden his horizon and lift his sky. In some sense this has been the purpose of every poet, and every reformer, and every philosopher, from Homer to Omar Khayam, and from Omar Khayam to Matthew Arnold. The beauty and the hopefulness of it all is in this, that no singer ever tuned his harp to sing a song of love, no soldier ever drew his sword to strike a blow for liberty, no scientist ever trimmed the wasting wick or consumed the midnight oil in studying the mysteries of the elements, no voyager ever sailed out into the unknown in search of virgin continent or open sea-passage, no inventor ever gave his mind to the improvement of more perfect methods of subduing matter, who did not by so much give more abundant life to men. A new book, a new development of thought, a new system of political or social or industrial economy, suggesting new relations, even a new question in historic criticism, opening up a new field for inquiry and investigation, enlarges life.

Have you ever thought how much more life means to us than it did to the man of the fourteenth century? "America had not yet risen to the view of man, steam had not yet been applied to machinery of any kind, and the idle lightnings were as yet untamed in the stagnant air. The sky was a sealed book, the earth was not yet decently habitable." The man who had access to a score of books was rich—and as to books, some people are still living in the dark ages. But how life has enlarged since

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then! How one man after another has added to the store of human thought and knowledge, Copernicus, Galileo, Gutenberg, Luther, Columbus, Newton, Watt, Herschel, Humboldt, Franklin, Livingston. Life is something greater than it was a little while ago, and daily it expands, daily its limits are extended. Sometimes we hear it said, "If we could only live to see the close of the twentieth century!" or "If we could only revisit the world a thousand years from now!" Why that? Why, but for the belief that there will be a more abundant life on earth in a hundred or a thousand years than there is now?

Yet great as life is, much as it means to us, life is still limited. We have but five senses and but three dimensions by which to obtain and measure the results of our knowledge. If we had a fourth dimension and a sixth sense, our knowledge would be increased, but the fourth dimension is as yet unknown, and there is no sixth sense, unless the spirit be its organ, and unless that sense be faith.

Whether faith may or may not be counted the sixth sense, I shall not discuss. But sure it is that religion does for us just what we have reason to believe a sixth sense would do. It adds a new department to life, gives us new thoughts, kindles within us new emotions, begets new sympathies, awakens us to new relations, and quickens us to new activities. And are these things not the marks of a more abundant life?

It is sometimes said that religion has nothing to do with life, but only with deathbeds and coffins

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and tombstones. He who thinks thus has misinterpreted the whole spirit of the Gospel. He is in deep error, and there is but one other who is equally involved—he who says, "Christianity has something to do with life, but it is the enemy of life, cripples it, enfeebles it, destroys it."

Christianity impairs life? What is the answer?—"I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill"—and fulfill means to fill full. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Conversion is the thrill of a waking life. The very essence of the Gospel is larger life. Christianity is a life, not something superimposed upon human nature, but something infused into it, and working through it, and blossoming out of it. Christianity has nothing to do with life? No ignorant man incapable of perceiving the true significance of a plain proposition, no sick man in the delirium of fever, no insane man in the passionate frenzy of delusion, ever conceived a more monstrous error. Christ ministered to the life here as well as the life eternal, and He emphasized both as no other teacher has ever done. He has done more to broaden and deepen life, to enlarge it in all possible dimensions, than any other man since time began. He began by giving life a new meaning. The New Testament takes a word which never had meant more than mere animal existence, and exalts it until it becomes another word, with a significance of which the Greek mind had never dreamed. Think of it—to take a word meaning mere animation and invest it with a suggestion of eternity!

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Is not that almost as much as the discovery of a fourth dimension? It gives life a new dimension, extent in a new direction, length, immortality. It introduces us into a new kind of life, life eternal. Then we come to see that our little lives are "not mere land-locked lakes, but inlets of the sea, with channels binding us to the great ocean beyond," and the tides of power which pour into our souls are from the eternal world.

Does it diminish the value of this life to know that there is another? Not if there is added to that knowledge the further fact that our character in this determines our destiny in that. Does it limit life to hold the things unseen to be more true than all things else, to strive for what is worth the most, the things that live forever? Does it contract our powers to be commissioned to disciple all nations? Is it a small thing to be taught the universal brotherhood of the race? That is the very genesis of cosmopolitanism. Such things make life large. The absence of them makes life small. Those who are blind to them have no outlook, no freedom of mind and soul, they do not see the sweep of things, they are of the earth, earthy. But take a man who has heard the voice of the Master, "Come to me," and what is life to him? At once there breaks new light upon his path. Something stirs in him hitherto undiscovered depths. He has lived a narrow life, but now he feels a pity for all pain, a sympathy for all sorrow, and those who were strangers to him once are kindred. His activities are intensified. He has a new passion,

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a personal love for an invisible Friend. He is like the soldier of the Old Guard, who, wounded in the breast, said to the surgeons as they were probing for the ball, "Go a little deeper, a little deeper, you'll find the name of the Emperor there." Christ is the name he loves, and life describes a new circle around that centre, a circle whose circumference takes in a new heaven and a new earth. His life has been made more abundant.

This is the secret of power, of self-conquest, of world-conquest—to live a life so large it cannot be defeated by the ills of time. I know of a woman who resolved to live such a life. She was poor, and lived in a little house, but she embraced in her Christian benevolence the whole heathen world, and by the proceeds of her self-denial she supported a missionary school in India. Richard Le Gallienne, in "The Religion of a Literary Man," tells of a friend of his who lost her husband by a sudden and violent death. It was a heart-breaking tragedy, and some of her friends looked to see her sink beneath the shock. But she did not. With courage and self-command she came back from the graveyard to resume her work. And when some of her friends marveled at it, one who knew her intimately said "No—she is a woman of many interests." That sounded strange, "a woman of many interests." What had that to do with her loss? Simply this: her life was too large to be defeated by any loss death could inflict. It was not that she did not love her husband with "the love that makes the world a temple." But the

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power that made her capable of one intense affection, made her capable of inviolable attachments to children, and friends, and mission schools, and charities. So when death left her a widow, instead of withdrawing herself from life's activities, she enshrined in her heart the memory of the absent one, and gave herself anew to the work of her life.

Some forty years ago a fair young Kentucky girl was stricken with a disease of the spine which left her an almost helpless invalid for life. She might have drawn a little circle about her sick-bed and lived in it, but she had too great a heart to be content with that. So she made her invalid's couch the center of a circumference which included the whole continent, and from her fertile brain there issued a thousand sweet and beautiful influences in the way of letters to those who are shut in.

They who sit at Jesus' feet do enter the abundant life. Out of winter they pass into spring, as the world passes into spring beneath the April sun. Out of the things that limit and fetter and suppress life they pass into the realm of that liberty which is the glory of the sons of God. Out of poverty they pass into all true wealth; out of sickness into the strength that is able to do all things through Christ.

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him."

"If thou knewest the gift of God"—oh, if men only knew! How much we miss by not knowing the gift of God. It is nothing less than life, life

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on the highest level, life in the largest relations, life deepening and widening like a river as it nears the sea. No man begins to live until he follows Him who is the Life, the Truth, the Way.



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“The religious heart is affected by only three or four doctrines. All the other ideas are perfectly harmless. They may be enumerated in a printed volume, but they cannot be counted in the human heart. What St. John’s religion was in detail no one knows ; but all know what it is to be in the spirit. This was known to Jesus, John and Paul : it was known to Fenelon and Chalmers and Pere Marquette, known to Cardinal Newman and the poet Cowper. The vital power of religion is stored away in a few joyous or solemn thoughts. All these widely scattered worshipers meet in the one spirit. Whatever differences of idea may exist down in the schools of theology, all men agree if only they are able to get into the upper air.”

—DAVID SWING.

“The New Covenant treats us not as children, but as full-grown, rational, and responsible human beings. It does not fetter us at every turn with ecclesiastical red tape. It changes our whole nature, so that we become, in the bold but literally exact language of St. Paul, ‘a new creation.’ It cleanses the very thoughts of our hearts ; so that our obedience is no longer a mechanical or external conformity to the regulations of an ecclesiastical ceremonial, but a healthy, natural, and spontaneous devotion to our Sovereign Father in heaven.”

—HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

*Essential Christianity.* Pages 142, 143.

## XVI.

### The Letter and The Spirit.

TEXT.—“The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”—2 Cor. 3: 6.

“Our sufficiency is of God who hath made us able ministers of the new testament”—these are the words which immediately precede the text. The word “ministers” is used in a wider sense than we generally attach to it. It has reference to the whole citizenship of the Kingdom of God on earth. It includes the laity as well as the clergy. The Greek word is the equivalent of our English word “deacon” and means “servant.” It is so translated in the first chapter of Romans where Phebe is spoken of as “a servant of the church which is in Cenchrea.”

The term “new testament” does not mean the last twenty-seven books of the Bible—the Christian Scriptures. They were not in existence collectively, and some of them not at all, when Paul wrote this Epistle. What then is this “new testament?” It is the new covenant, the new dispensation as distinct from the old, the Gospel in contrast with the Law.

So the text reads, “Our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able servants of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

It is a general affirmation of the superiority of Christianity to Judaism. To say that the Gospel is

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better than the Law is not to say that the Law was not the best thing in the world for those who have it. It was a divine revelation, beneficent and beautiful. To see that it was a divine revelation we have only to compare the Mosaic code with the unwritten code of contemporary nations as judged by their manners and customs. It is so far in advance of them in sanity, in morality, in social and political righteousness, that it is incredible that any nation should have evolved such a code in such an age. To see that it was beneficent, we have only to read its provisions with reference to the poor, the insolvent, the slave; with reference to suffering animals. Think of it—these people were not out of Egypt a hundred years. Egyptian ideas still lingered in their minds. Nowhere was human life so cheap, nowhere were men's rights so lightly regarded as in Egypt. But this code is written, and they accept it, with all its reverence for human life, with all it implied democracy, with all its pervasive humaneness. To see that it was beautiful we have only to study the poetic symbolism of breastplate and robe, altar and sacrifice, tabernacle and mercy seat.

The Law of Moses, the old covenant, was beautiful, beneficent and divine, but it was not permanent, it was not designed to be. It was not perfect, but it led to something that was perfect. It led to the Gospel of Christ. "The law was our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ." That is why it passed away. We need schoolmasters while we are children, but when we have come to manhood,

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to strength and wisdom, to the ability to think and judge for ourselves, we dispense with the school-master; his office is discharged, his ministry is fulfilled because we have come to something better, to independent and intellectual manhood.

All that I have said of the old covenant concerns its character. Now, as to its method, it was literal; that is, exact in detail, strict in construction. The people were commanded to do certain things and forbidden to do others. They were told how to build their place of worship, and how to furnish it. The priests were instructed how to wear their robes and how to offer prayer. Certain things were to be touched and certain other must not be approached. They were not left in doubt about anything. The congregation knew how to present themselves before the priest, how to perform their ceremonial ablutions, what to eat and what to let alone. It was most elaborate and comprehensive. Indeed it was so much so as to be burdensome. Yet it was the burdensomeness of discipline, and it had its result in the training of the best race the world had so far seen, a clean and wholesome people who did for religion what the Greeks did for art and what the Romans did for government. It taught the Hebrew race such conceptions of God and righteousness as fitted them to be the supreme religious teachers of the world.

There was one thing, however, Judaism did not do—it did not set the people free. It did not give them that broad vision of truth, and that keen vision of duty, necessary to life on the highest level.

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It made theists of them, and it made moralists of them; they were the Puritans of their times. But with all the royalty of Puritanism, are we not glad that the old Puritanism has passed away? Puritanism had its function; it exalted law, and above all, the law of God; but it was too literal to remain. It bound men by too many commandments. A boy must not whistle on Sunday. Women must not cook on Sunday. A man must not smoke within two miles of a meeting-house. Undue levity was a gross offense. A joke carried with it the suspicion of worldliness. People who were living for eternity had no time for the pleasures of life. Such a system produced some magnificent men, Cromwell, Milton and Bunyan, but when it had done its work God ordained that it should decline.

What is the weakness of literalism—of any system of morals or religion which proposes to furnish men cast iron rules by which to regulate their lives? We see the strength of it, the preparation of men for something better, but what is the weakness of it? It abridges individual freedom. It arrests the development of broad character. It enslaves men to the external, the formal, the non-essential. Was it not so with the Jews? As they grew more intense, they grew more narrow. In their regard for the minutiae of form, tradition accumulated an incalculable amount of rubbish. The hands were to be washed in such and such a manner. "The tips of the fingers were to be joined and lifted up; fresh water was to be poured upon them so that it ran down to the elbows; then they were to be turned

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down, and fresh water poured over them twice." Certain words to be pronounced. The towel was to be laid in a certain place. The excess to which these regulations were carried was absurd. Moses had bidden them wash their hands after touching a dead body. They held it necessary to wash their hands after coming in from the street, because one may have touched somebody who had touched somebody or something dead. There came to be required by custom as many washings in a day as Moses prescribed in a month. Many people could afford neither the time nor the thought to practice such scruples. The Pharisees practiced them all and consequently thought themselves very righteous. They found fault with Christ and His disciples because they ignored such puerile matters. The letter had utterly extinguished spirituality. Life had become a slavery. People had come to think more of the importance of clean hands than of clean hearts. They had substituted the worship of the lips for the worship of the soul. They avoided unclean food more than unclean thoughts. We say, "As a man thinketh so is he." They said, "As a man eateth, so is he."

It was a time for reform when things had come to such a pass. Christ began his ministry when there was greatest need for a gospel of the spirit. It was time for the schoolmaster to be dismissed and for men to have a chance to develop a degree of freedom. So our Lord laid all emphasis upon the spirit. He observed or He violated tradition as seemed most expedient. He suffered Himself to be

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baptized, but He baptized no one, so far as we know. He touched dead bodies, and the bodies of lepers, and made no haste to wash His hands. He took women into his comradeship and taught them, although the prejudice against educating women was very deep. He sat at meat with the Publican. He visited the hated region of Samaria, and still more despised coast country of Tyre and Sidon. This was His whole life—teaching by word and act that righteousness does not consist in form of external observance but in those conditions of spirit beautified in the Sermon of the Mount—meekness, purity, peaceableness, prayerfulness, and patience. He gave no elaborate rules for the guidance of His disciples. Only one commandment He added to the code and that was a very simple one, "Love one another." His followers wanted a form of prayer, and He gave them one of a dozen lines. But He never said, "Pray this prayer," but "After this manner pray ye."

He went to the Temple. He was present in the Synagogue at Nazareth, but He never ascribed any mysterious virtue to church-going. He would not have people think that an hour of worship can atone for a week of absorbing worldliness. He would not have people regard certain places as sacred places and certain others as profane. He would make the whole world a sacred place. He said, "The hour is coming and now is when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit." This was the beginning of

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the new order. The reign of law was ended and the reign of grace begun. "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life."

Do you see the bearing of this on our lives? There are two conceptions of Christianity, the literal and the spiritual. There are those to whom Christianity is wholly technical. They are verbalists, theorists. They exalt their standards of thought and systems of truth, and will save men according to their formula or let them perish. The Kingdom of God in their estimation is the little corner they occupy, and all outside are aliens, heretics, schismatics, who, if they are saved at all are saved upon the same conditions as infants and idiots—their ignorance excuses them. A certain English nobleman confessed that he was twenty-five years old before he knew that anyone outside of the Church of England had ever said anything worth reading! That is, he was twenty-five years old before he began to think freely, and to grant others the right to interpret the Scriptures for themselves.

There are some who exalt ceremonialism above the Word of God and above the moral law. Such have been known to commit crime unblushingly, but to shudder at the thought of eating meat on Friday. The members of the Clan-na-Gael who murdered Doctor Cronin in Chicago were too devout to touch the Agnus Dei he wore about his neck, but they were not too moral to beat his brains out, and strip his body and hide it in a sewer! A Hindoo Thug confessed that he had killed three

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hundred and twenty people and was only troubled because he had killed one after a white hare had crossed his path! Mr. Kennan observed some Mohammedans praying on the deck of a Danube steamer. They were very particular to turn their faces towards Mecca. They consulted their compasses to see in what direction the Holy City lay. But the river is so crooked, and the steamer shifted its course so often, that they were very greatly disturbed in their devotions when they discovered after finishing a prayer that they had prayed Northeast instead of East. That is the gospel of the letter. And how far from the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of Liberty, the Gospel of the Spirit. What says the Master? "Keep thy heart for out of it are the issues of life. Keep thy conscience for it is the voice of God. Search the Scriptures for they testify of Me. Pray in the spirit, for prayer is communion with the Father. Love thy neighbor for he too is a son of God, an heir of immortality. Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." These words, the words He speaks—Knowledge, Truth, Freedom, they are spirit and they are life.

Deliver us, O Lord, from bondage to the letter, from strife about words, from undue devotion to forms of faith. Grant us the Holy Spirit that we may know the meaning of Thy Word, not in part but the whole. Lead us up to the one great fact of the universe, the one great fact of history, the person of Jesus Christ. Bind us to Him. In all the

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ways of life, through doubt, through loss, through failure, through death, let Him lead us, who is the Way, the Truth, the Life, and we will praise Thee with everlasting praise. Amen.



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“At this hour, when so many voices are calling you, the one voice which you are to hear is that of Him who says, ‘FOLLOW ME.’ Hear that once, and then you will take your places under His banner by the side of those who are waging with Him the great battle of all time. It is around Him that the thick of this battle has always been. Around Him it always will be. Take, then, your places. You are needed. The veterans are falling. Who shall take their places? The strong men are fainting. Who shall succor them? Go ye, and the earth shall be better and happier for your having lived in it.”

—MARK HOPKINS.

*Teachings and Counsels.* Page 173.

“In every man’s life there come moments when he is called to decide whether to go forward or to stand still. Timidity says, ‘Hesitate!’ Prudence says, ‘Be not too hasty. Take aim!’ Self-interest says, ‘You may hurt yourself; you may run risks. You may injure your prospects of worldly success.’ But conscience says, ‘The hour has come. Go and do your duty,’ and everything generous and noble in the heart responds and says amen!”

—JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

*Every-day Religion.* Page 219.

## XVII.

### Under Sealed Orders.

TEXT—"And he went out, not knowing whither he went."—Hebrews 11: 8.

More than once during recent days we have read in the daily papers that such and such a vessel has left port "under sealed orders." By this we understand that for prudential reasons no man outside of the naval department knows the destination of the ship, or the purpose of the movement. The commander himself does not know, much less any of his crew. He is not to know until, far out at sea, the orders are opened and the direction of the vessel determined accordingly. The text tells of a man who, long ago, left friends and home and native land, in utter ignorance of his journey's end, and of whom it may be said, to use a nautical figure, he sailed under sealed orders.

It was a momentous day for Abraham when he left Chaldea, crossed the Euphrates, and set his face toward the dreaded desert and the land beyond. It was not a long journey as we measure journeys, but it was far in those days, farther than to the Klondike, or to the Antipodes. And it meant much to him. It was leaving forever the tents of his fathers and the altars of their gods. The race was not far from its childhood, the world was small, and he was going to its utmost rim. But, momentous as was that day to Abraham, it was a more eventful day

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for the world. It was a break in human history, a fresh point of departure towards civilization, a kind of new creation of man.

"He went forth not knowing whither he went." Why, then, did he go? Was he driven out of his native land by poverty—were the grazing lands of Ur exhausted? No. Were there rumors of boundless treasures in the west? No. Was it restlessness that impelled him—the natural love of a migratory life? No. He was indeed driven, but inwardly. He was led out by a conviction that he ought to go. He might have said to those who would have detained him,

"I see a hand you cannot see,  
That beckons me away;  
I hear a voice you cannot hear,  
That says I must not stay."

A voice had said unto him, "Get thee out of thy country unto a land that I will show thee."

He had seen a heavenly vision, and like Paul, two thousand years later, he was not disobedient. This, then, is the immediate cause of his departure. God had called him out. But what was the philosophy of the event? We search in vain for any evidence that Abraham knew why he was going. Certainly he knew not whither.

We know why Abraham was called out of Ur. It is easy to read the philosophy of history after four thousand years. But they who find the first paths across the mountains do not know the configuration of the country. They make the maps, and we read them. The soldiers who fight in a

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great battle know little about it. They know there is a charge here and a retreat there. They know where, upon the field, the panic of fear seized them, and where, forgetful of themselves, they pushed on to victory. But the plan, the purpose of the different movements and of the general movement, they do not know until the battle is over, and then we all know. They make history, and we read it. It is easy for us now to see that it was God's plan to select and train a special race for purposes of righteousness; that some man must be the father of a family whose descendants were to be kept apart from the heathen world until, at last, educated in the worship of God, educated in the apprehension of His spirituality, His holiness, and His love, they should be capable of furnishing the human ancestry of the Messiah. This was God's purpose in calling Abraham out of Chaldean idolatry. It was impossible for Abraham to see it, but it was not necessary that he should see it. He had faith in God, faith in the invisible world, faith in the future, faith in the hidden reason of his appointed pilgrimage.

If we study the character of Abraham to find in him a sufficient justification for his migration, we have it in this word, faith. The chapter from which the text is taken is about faith. By faith Abel and Enoch and Noah and Moses lived lives of commanding power. If the word faith be an empty word to us, it is our fault, for it is no empty word in the history of the past if we rightly read it, nor in the experience of the present if we rightly

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live it. "We walk by faith, not by sight," says Paul, and that word "walk" means all of life—"We live by faith not by sight." No better definition of faith can be found than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Paul did not write it, but it is Pauline in its felicity; "Faith is the substance (that is the ground) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith stands for the invisible realities of the universe, sight stands for the visible. Whether we live by faith or by sight depends upon whether we live by invisible or visible things. Surely the invisible world contains a far larger number of facts which concern us than the visible world. If you doubt it, remember that thought, love, and conscience belong to the invisible world. Our scholarship and our character depend upon our knowledge of and our faith in these things. Commerce takes no note of the unseen. But do we live by commerce, for it, in it, wholly? Some do. But do we? Is commerce all? Then we live by sight. God pity the world when men give themselves up entirely to material things. It may be a rich world in what may be measured by the yard-stick or weighed by the pound, but it will be a poor world in which to grow heroes and saints. God pity a State that is rich only in what appeals to the eye. God pity a man when he banishes faith from his life. He voluntarily impoverishes himself, and though he be a king, all he possesses is not worth the pebbles that cover a pauper's grave.

We are not to shut our eyes to visible things. We are not to go through the world as though it

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were a bleak and barren desert. It is God's world, and it is full of beauty, full of the riches of His glory. But we are not to forget that life is broadened, deepened, sweetened, dignified, and made worth living by the things upon which we lay hold by faith and faith alone. It is by faith we cultivate virtue and conquer sin; by faith we hush complaints and tolerate annoyances; by faith we teach ourselves to bear the ills of life with calm content, and close our eyes to earth with confidence in the life to come.

It is beautiful to remember that God gave to Abraham something more than a command to support his faith. "Go, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." And how abundantly that promise was fulfilled. Abraham lost something by obeying the command, but he gained more in the fulfillment of the promise. He lost his native soil, but he gained a better, richer and more fertile land, full of palms and pastures and fountains; he lost his father's home, but he gained one of his own; he lost family distinction, but he became himself the most distinguished man in the better order. His name was great, and remains great. Jew and Mohammedan and Christian alike call him Father Abraham. But the greatest blessing is to be a blessing, and in him were all nations blessed. When did any man ever lose anything by obeying a divine command, who did not in return receive a hundred-fold? "Thou shalt be blessed and thou shalt be a blessing." Is not

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this enough to lead us to leave anything, to suffer anything, to do anything God requires?

A young woman who went to India as a medical missionary a few years ago, writes back—"I left much at home, but I have found more here." That is God's way of rewarding his servants. The husbandman loses something when he sows his grain, but he gains more when the harvest comes. That which we sow is not quickened unless it die. We must die to some things that we may live to others. He who dies to self that he may live to service, he who dies to indulgence that he may live to denial, he who dies to ease that he may live to duty, dies to that which is worth the least and lives to that which is worth the most. God is not a hard taskmaster.

Abraham was not the last to hear the solemn call to leave a life that was dear to him for a life chosen for him by the Lord. He was almost the first. So God called Moses, and so Paul, and so all the Apostles. What a volume of history would be the lives of all who have gone out at God's command, leaving old associations, old and dear traditions, old and close-fitting modes of thought and action, not knowing whither they went, only sure that God was leading them. In that spirit went forth Luther, to give the world the Reformation; Wycliffe, to give England the Bible; Columbus, to give mankind a new hemisphere; the Pilgrim Fathers, to found a religious commonwealth; the first missionaries to heathendom, to expand the empire of Jesus Christ among men. In that spirit goes forth every man who leaves his old life at the Master's summons,

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"Follow Me." And who of us has not heard that call—the call to break with our sinful past, our unprofitable associations, our narrow aims and ends, to live the patriarchal life of prayer and trust and reverent walk with God?

People who live at Niagara Falls say they do not hear the roar of the cataract. That is because they always hear it, and as it becomes a common sound they become indifferent to it. It is easy for us to grow indifferent to the divine call to a better life. Let us hear it this hour, the Master's message from His own Word, saying—"If any man will be My Disciple, let him take up his cross, deny himself daily, and follow Me."

The last words of a distinguished minister of Boston who died not long ago were these, "Never say 'No' to God." This is my message to you to-day, "Never say 'No' to God." He calls you out of your Ur to His promised land, to live a life more true and genuine, more worthy of immortality. He calls you to give you a blessing and make you a blessing. May yours be the sentiment of the poet who wrote:

"Before me lies an unknown sea,  
The port is left behind;  
Strong waves are foaming at the prow,  
The sails bend to the wind.  
"What is my quest? Why fare I forth?  
Not mine it is to say,  
He whom I serve has given command,  
I have but to obey.  
"So to the overguiding Will  
My own I gladly yield,  
And while my little craft outstands,  
I sail with orders sealed.

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"I may not read them if I would,  
I would not if I might;  
Nor hold the duty less, but more,  
Whose chart is falth, not slght.

"Some time, I know not when or how,  
All things will be revealed;  
And until then content am I  
To sail with orders sealed."

Strength for Weak Hands.

“ If there be good in that I wrought,  
Thy hand compelled it, Master, thine;  
Where I have failed to meet Thy thought,  
I know, through Thee, the blame is mine.

“ One instant's toil to Thee denied  
Stands all eternity's offense,  
Of that I did with Thee to guide,  
To Thee, through Thee, be excellence.

“ Who, lest all thought of Eden fade,  
Bring'st Eden to the craftsman's brain,  
Godlike to muse o'er his own trade  
And manlike stand with God again.

“ The depth and dream of my desire,  
The bitter paths wherein I stray,  
Thou knowest who hast made the fire,  
Thou knowest who hast made the clay.

“ One stone the more swings to her place  
In that dread temple of thy worth,  
It is enough that through Thy grace  
I saw naught common on Thy earth.

“ Take not that vision from my ken;  
O whatsoe'er may spoil or speed,  
Help me to need no aid from men  
That I may help such men as need !

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

## XVIII.

### Strength for Weak Hands.

TEXT.—“Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees.”—Isaiah 35: 3.

Who are those of weak hands and feeble knees? The context here and in the Epistle to the Hebrews where the text is quoted, shows that they are not such as have never put their hands to the plough, but rather those who have labored for the Lord and grown weary. They need encouragement. “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.”

It is not strange that Christian workers become discouraged. It is no new experience. It was old even in Isaiah’s day. No man has ever faced the problems of life—not the problems of his life alone, but of all life, and endeavored manfully to solve them with reference to the life to come, who has not at times had borne in upon him the apparent inequality of the battle, the apparent futility of the endeavor; who has not felt the ground uncertain beneath him, his knees growing feeble for the march, his hands weak for strife.

For those who have never striven to stay the flood of evil which sweeps so many from their footing, and which, unresisted, would speedily overwhelm the race; for those who have never marched a mile nor smitten a foe, there is no message in this chapter. But for the weary soldier, for the cast-

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down and the disquieted, for the man who has stopped a little while to get his breath and look ahead there is a message. There is much more than appears upon the surface. It is all suggested by this verse, "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees." To make plain what is only suggested here, to bring to your remembrance some considerations of helpfulness in Christian work, is the purpose of this study.

Will it not strengthen our hands to reflect that we who do the Lord's work are never alone? We may seem to be alone, the world may think we are alone, and we ourselves, in hours of weakness may conclude we are alone, but are never without the Master's presence. We are not always conscious of the nearness of Jesus Christ. He is not visible to these eyes. Even our spiritual vision at times grows dim. But it is as when a star is hidden by a cloud, the star is still there, the cloud is transient. It is as when the sun is hidden by a fog. The sun is still in the sky, the fog will vanish. There are times when our environments are so friendly that we need to reflect that God is near us and to know how near He is. Listen to a parable: A little child was sleeping in his bed not far from his father. During the night the little one awakened from a troubled dream and called, "Papa, are you awake? I wish you would hold my hand; I am afraid." The father took the little hand reached out through the darkness, and held it until sleep "kissed down the lids of weary eyes." Christian brother, He that keepeth thee never slumbers, and when, in this

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troubled life, fear comes to thy heart like the specter of a dream, prayer is the human hand that clasps the Father's hand, and in that hand-clasp there is strength unspeakable.

We need also human fellowship in our work. And we are not altogether alone in that respect. Some one said to Father Taylor in his last sickness, "You will soon be among the angels." The sturdy, life-loving old saint replied, "I don't want angels, I want folks." There is a door in our hearts which opens on the human side and there often we stand looking for folks—folks who know our aims and sympathize with them, folks who know our hopes and share them. The greatest hardship our pioneer missionaries suffer in foreign lands is their isolation, the absence of people of their kind. When the first Protestant missionary arrived in Calcutta, he advertised, asking if there was another Christian in the whole country, and seeking an interview. There was no answer. It was this that drew the early Christians so closely together—the fact that there were not many of them, and that they needed one another to lean on and learn from. It comforted Elijah to know that there were seven thousand souls in Israel who had not forsaken God. He had thought he was alone.

In our age it is truer than ever before that the Christian worker is not solitary. Innumerable hearts are beating in unison with his. Innumerable minds are studying the same Scriptures. Innumerable hands are working at the same tasks. The disciples of our Lord did not know how many

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friends they had until the dark days came. Their number was greater than they had known. I rejoice in a well-reasoned optimism which counts among the friends of God and righteousness many who wear no badge of discipleship, but who bend the knee and lift the heart in prayer for Heaven's blessing upon the Church of Christ.

There is something in the nature of our work, in its constructive character, the thought of which should encourage us. It is not pleasant to think of one's workmanship as adding nothing to the welfare of the world. The genuineness of an occupation is measured by the degree of pride the workman has in his finished product. An honest artisan, an honest mechanic, an honest shopkeeper, or an honest farmer, knows himself as a part of the necessary industrial and commercial furnishing of a commonwealth. If "he who makes two blades of grass grow where only one has grown before is a public benefactor," every man who adds anything of permanent value to the world is helping to build the state and establish society upon a permanent and prosperous basis. The hand that plants a tree whose shade shall refresh or whose fruit shall nourish coming generations; the pen that writes a poem and stirs our hearts to courage or melts our eyes to manly tears; the voice that sings a song and uplifts us to heights of purer hope and stronger strife; the skill that paints a picture and prolongs for a thousand years the lovely vision of a moment; the cunning that contrives an organ to accompany a lullaby or support a chorus of a hundred voices; the genius

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that plans and constructs a temple worthy to be a place of spiritual worship, or a house worthy to be a sanctuary of love—all these are necessary to the maintenance and enlargement of life. They who do anything to make life more liberal are builders. They are building the state, society, the race. They may not see the whole edifice, but they are building, and their monuments shall last so long as the earth sweeps around the circle of the sun.

There is a story of a Hebrew stone-mason three thousand years ago, whose work was in the underground quarries in the heart of the hill from which the stones were taken for the building of the temple. The master-mason had given him a design, and day by day he worked not knowing just what it was he was doing, the stone he was cutting and polishing was so unlike anything for which he could imagine any use. At last the temple was finished and the Feast of Dedication was ushered in with the sound of silver trumpets. The stone-mason took his wife Rachel and his son Benjamin to see the perfect work of years. He studied the whole building, its massive foundations, its polished pillars, its noble entrances. Suddenly something caught his eyes, and he said, "Rachel, look; do you see that arched portal, that central stone? That is my workmanship; that is what I worked on and worried about lest it should have no place in the temple. It is the key-stone of the main arch."

Another equally beautiful legend is that of the Oriental monarch who erected a temple and had his name carved in a marble tablet in great bold letters

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where all might see. But when the work was done, one night somebody chiseled out the monarch's name, and carved there the name of a woman whom nobody seemed to know. By searching they found her, a poor obscure soul, as much surprised as they that she should be celebrated as the builder of such an edifice. The king inquired, "What have you done? what have you given? what service have you rendered?" After much thought she replied, "All I can remember is that one day I saw the workmen hauling material with teams of oxen, and the poor beasts looked so tired and hungry, I plucked a few handfuls of grass and fed them and went my way." I give you these stories my fellow-Christians because you are builders. You are building the Kingdom of God on earth. You cannot see it—the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Some are digging in the trenches, some are blasting in the quarries, some are polishing and some are fitting stones in their places; some are hewing cedars, some are bringing gold, some are adding strength and some are adding beauty, some are working where none but the eye of God can see, but if we are building, if we remember this—that our work is constructive, our hands will grow stronger and our feet steadier.

What a day for the world and for us when the temple is done, when the Kingdom of God shall have come, the Heavenly City descended upon earth. Angels shall hail it, and ransomed hosts shall shout for joy. And we shall stand, every humble toiler, every obscure laborer, every unseen

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agent, approved by the Master-Builder a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

Another helpful consideration for Christian workers is the assurance that though we die the work does not die. "God buries his workers but the work goes on." It was a sad day for the Church when Paul, first of Apostles, was led out to his death, but the work went on, for there was a Timothy to wear the mantle of a Paul. It was a sad day for the church when John, gentlest of Apostles, fell asleep, but the work went on, for there was a Polycarp to wear the mantle of a John. In old Roman days when couriers carried tidings by foot from the Capital to remote parts of the empire, they had frequent relays of runners, so that one messenger, exhausted, handed his message to another, waiting, and the news spread on. By night, they carried torches. A weary runner would hand his torch and his tidings to another, there was a hasty word, a sound on the midnight air, and the herald was gone. It has been so since the King of Kings gave the first disciples their evangel of good news. The hands that held the torch till life was low passed it on undimmed to others, and we are here to-day lineal successors of the immortal band who had from Christ's own lips the word of truth, and from His hands the gift of healing sin-sick souls.

The work goes on. Our work goes on. I mean by this, we reproduce ourselves in others. He who said, "I am a part of all I have seen," knew how the growth of character involves absorption of every-

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thing within reach. If we are a part of all we have ever seen much more are we a part of all we have ever done. Not only do we build the Kingdom of God, but we build ourselves into the Kingdom. You go to church and hear your pastor preach a sermon. Your pastor is not the only speaker. All who ever had any part in his training—the lips that taught him his first prayer, the Sunday school teachers who interpreted to him the Scriptures in the impressionable years of his ladhood, the pastor who received him into the church, the man who first said to him, "If God calls you to preach, resist not the Spirit"—all these have a part in the sermon. They live in their workmanship.

There is no immortality like that of religious work. No good word ever spoken for Jesus Christ ever died away in silence. No good deed done in His name ever fell fruitless to the ground. Longfellow's poem, "The Arrow and the Song," beautifully teaches this lesson. We sing our song of faith, of hope, of trust, of courage, and somewhere it finds lodgment in a human heart. We pass away but the song never passes away. He who heard it from our lips will sing it in some hour of sorrow, and another soul will stronger grow and holier be for its hearing.

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"Such a life as this cannot be a failure. Whatever sacrifices it may involve, whatever losses it may appoint, whatever enemies it may make, whatever poverty or richness it may bring, if it be a life of faith within, exemplified by activity without, it will be a life of light and peace and hope. If a man maintains a supreme allegiance to Christ as his Master and Guide, and if he exemplifies that faith in all the activities of his human nature and the opportunities of human life, he cannot fail."

—NOAH PORTER.

*Fifteen Years in the Chapel of Yale College.*

Pages 370, 371.

"We are all capitalists. The only pauper in the world is a dumb, deaf, and blind idiot. Let us examine our capacities and gifts and then put them to the best use we may. As our own view of life is of necessity partial, I do not find that we can do better than to put them absolutely into God's hand, and look to him for the direction of our life energy. God can do great things with our lives, if we but give them to Him in sincerity. He can make them useful, uplifting, heroic. God never wastes anything. God never loses anything. Though He holds the world in the hollow of His hand, He will yet remember each of us, and the part we are fitted to play in the eternal drama."

—ANNA ROBERTSON BROWN.

*What is Worth While.*

## XIX.

### The Reward of Fidelity.

**TEXT.**—"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2: 10.

In the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation, we have seven distinct messages to seven separate churches. The first is to the Church in Ephesus; the second, to the Church in Smyrna; the third, to the Church in Pergamum; the fourth, to the Church in Thyatira; the fifth, to the Church in Sardis; the sixth, to the Church in Philadelphia; the seventh, to the Church in Laodicea. This much at least of the book is historic. It is not all visions and dreams. Here are pictures of the Church in its infancy, the Church as it was in the very century sanctified by the lifetime of its divine Founder. These pictures are not alone historic, however. They are prophetic of what the Church is to do and be in coming time. The seven Churches are representative. They are types of Christianity in its possible conditions. Ephesus is orthodox, but lacks fervency; Smyrna is faithful in the face of death; Pergamum is steadfast in general, but too tolerant of false doctrines; Thyatira is diligent in works of love and charity, yet consents to corrupt practices; Sardis is asleep but not past awakening; Philadelphia is destitute of worldly influence but is doing a great work; Laodicea has abundant means but is indifferent and inactive.

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The messages to these Church are messages to the Church of to-day—to us, messages of correction and reproof, of praise and promise, of solemnity and tenderness.

It will be observed that the Spirit has nothing but praise for two of the Churches, nothing but censure for two, and mingled encouragement and rebuke for the other three. Smyrna is one of the two in which the penetrating glance of Him who seeth all finds no fault. Smyrna was a prosperous and dissolute city. The Church there was poor, and in the midst of persecution. Its members were struggling, suffering, dying for their faith. The Spirit knew all that—He knew they needed not rebuke but comfort, so He said: “Unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write; these things saith the First and Last, which was dead and is alive; I know thy works and tribulation and poverty, (but thou art rich;) be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.”

There are many fine things in these messages, but this seems to me quite the finest. It is but a fragment, and I will put with it a portion of the message to the Church in Pergamum and commend these words to you with the hope that they may minister to your help as they have to mine. “Be thou faithful.” “Antipas my faithful martyr.”

In an age like this, which has been called “the era of the phenomenal,” when great honors come to the successful man, the clever man, the brilliant man; we have need to reflect upon the value of the man who is content not to be great, not to shine,

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not to be considered clever, the man who is simply faithful. I spoke of this age as though it were peculiar in this; but after all the ages are much alike in some respects. The man who succeeds is the one who gets the crown. That is the old, old way, the world's way. But it is not God's way. He crowns the brow of the man who tries but fails; who runs but is out-distanced; who fights but is beaten down in the fray. It is not that he crowns failure, but that he rewards fidelity.

I would not discourage ambition. I would not paralyze the very nerve of effort. Ambition is honorable—if it be an honorable ambition. The question is, what is the end and aim of our ambition? Is it eminence? Is it prominence? Is it recognition? Is it "keeping up with the procession?" If so, it is a mistaken ambition, a false idea of the purpose of life. At the moment of a soul's awakening, let a man ask, What am I here for? What is there for me to do, which, if I omit, will convict me of folly, which, if I do, will gain for me the crown? And up from the inner depths of conscience, and down from the serene heights of revelation, (God's two-fold voice) comes the answer, "You are here to do God's will and to do it faithfully; you can do nothing more, you should be content with nothing else."

But what is God's will concerning me? What has He appointed me to do? Where has He sent me to serve? Three things to determine that—ability, opportunity, obligation. Not ability alone, for there are men in the ranks who might leave the

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army, men in the workshop who might rule the kingdom; not ability and opportunity alone, for there are times when men of capacity see before them open doors, leading to greater fields of activity, but they feel the force of some superior moral obligation to remain where they are. I think of such an instance now—a man of splendid culture and forceful character, who was offered an appointment as minister to a foreign court. He had the ability, and here was the opportunity, but there were other considerations. His aged parents needed him; they were in the sunset of their lives; he was their daily visitor, their only earthly stay; moreover, his son was just finishing his education, and was about to begin the serious work of life; he needed the counsel and inspiration of his father's presence. And so this man turned away from an honor that any citizen might be proud to bear, from a career which promised national renown. If you say, "He ought to have chosen to do the greatest good to the greatest number," I reply, There are times when it is clearly the will of God that we should seek the greatest good to the smallest number, times when the smallest number are most in need of us.

It is true that circumstances determine the sphere to which we are ordained—that God appoints us where our circumstances imprison us. That is a curious word, "circumstances"—the things that surround us, that hem us in, that keep us where we are. It is a capacious word, standing for all I have mentioned, ability, opportunity, obligation. It stands

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for Providence, for the Eternal Powers which ordain our abilities, provide our opportunities and create our obligations. So, the man who complains he is a victim of circumstances, is accusing Providence, and has a false conception of his mission in the world.

What does God require of us? Simply to do His will where we are, to do our best in present circumstances, to be faithful in our little sphere though it be but a cornfield, or a carpenter's bench, or a school room, or a clerk's desk or a kitchen.

Who was this man Antipas whose name appears in the text? No one knows, except that he was a member of the Church at Pergamum, and that there, "where Satan's seat was," he was faithful unto death. Possibly no one knew him outside the city of his residence. But God knew him, called him "my faithful martyr," and his name comes to us across the centuries as that of one who counted not his life dear unto him that he might fight the good fight and finish the course. He is one of a multitude of obscure souls most of whom the world has forgotten, but who were God's faithful witnesses and who sealed their testimony with their blood, whose bodies were burned or fed to beasts of prey, but whose spirits wear forever the crown that fadeth not away.

The days of martyrdom are numbered with the past. It requires no great courage in Christian lands to be known as a disciple of the Nazarene. It would be better for us if the world were not quite so tolerant. It would be better for the Church if

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martyr-fires were lighted now and then. There might be fewer Christians, but the few would weigh more. One of the international secretaries of the Young Men's Christian Association went to the Orient three or four years ago to survey the missionary field. He testifies that he seemed not far away from Apostolic days when in China he worshipped in congregations in which there were sometimes scores of people who bore about in their bodies "the marks of the Lord Jesus." Some had been whipped, some had been stoned, some had been maimed for life, some had had their ears cut off, and some held up the stump of an arm, mute but eloquent evidence of a good confession. Many had suffered the spoiling of their goods. A modern John might point to such and number them with Antipas.

Among the preachers appointed to their work by Bishop Fowler when he presided over the Chinese Conferences a few years ago, was one who had been converted away from home, and straightway went back to his native city to tell his family and friends of his new-found Saviour. But they would not hear him, and a mob seized him, and beat him, and cast him out of the city bleeding and unconscious. When he revived, he went back and began to preach as before. The mob attacked him again and left him outside the city wall, apparently dead. Again he revived and again he preached Christ. The mob gathered to kill him, but the officers interfered and put him in prison for safe keeping. Then he preached through the prison bars to passers-by and

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to those who gathered around. When the Bishop asked him where he wanted to be sent, he said, "Back to my native city." He was another "Antipas, faithful witness." Such testimony is not for us to bear. We read, we teach, we preach the Word of God, and none molests or makes afraid. It is not because the world believes in Christ—it is the same world that crucified Him, and cried, "Release unto us Barabbas." Men have simply grown indifferent. Whether we preach Christ, or whether we preach Buddha, or whether we preach Mahomet, or whether we preach Madame Blavatsky—it is all the same to the world. We must not however become too earnest, we must not insist upon it "that there is none other name given under Heaven whereby we must be saved," we must not affirm that "Christ is not received at all if He be not received above all," for if we do the world will look askance, the devotees of fashion, the apostles of "liberalism" will brand us as narrow, and fanatic, and behind the times. Yes, but that is our testimony, to cleave to Christ though all men leave Him, to face a sneer like that of the Jew and a scorn like that of the Greek, and still say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto Salvation."

This is our testimony—to be faithful where our lines are cast; faithful in the Sunday school class where we have just one little hour a week to teach religion to a handful of restless boys; faithful in the Young People's Society which started out with the enthusiasm of numbers but now has come to the

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point where only consecrated workers may be depended upon; faithful in the church which too often confesses by its vacant pews and languishing prayer meetings that it is no longer first in the affection of its members; faithful in the family, the divine organism, the Church in our household, whose altar is too often deserted and whose children are too often strangers to the voice of prayer; faithful in the shop where we work side by side with one who awaits our word of friendly urging to become a Christian; faithful in the store or office in which we may exert a silent but powerful influence for righteousness. A young man who united with the Church a short time ago was asked what particular person led him to take that step. He replied, "The fellow whose desk is next to mine in the bank. We are both bookkeepers with plenty of work and moderate salaries. He lives such a simple, contented, trustful life that I want to know how to make my life as fine as his." That was one man's testimony—to live a fine life, to do his work well, to exemplify the excellence of faith in God and fellowship with Christ.

**The Spirit of the Soldier.**

“Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living and your belief will help create the fact. The ‘scientific’ proof that you are right may not be clear before the day of judgment (or some stage of being which that expression may serve to symbolize) is reached. But the faithful fighters of this hour, or the beings that then and there will represent them, may then turn to the faint-hearted, who here decline to go on, with words like those with which Henry IV. greeted the tardy Crillon after a great victory had been gained: ‘Hang yourself, brave Crillon! We fought at Arques, and you were not there!’”

—WILLIAM JAMES.

*The Will to Believe.* Page 62.

“The universe belongs to him who wills, who knows, who prays; but he *must* will, he *must* know, he *must* pray—in a word, he must possess force, wisdom, faith.”

—BALZAC.

“And he who flagg’d not in the earthly strife,  
From strength to strength, advancing—only he,  
His soul well-knit and all his battles won,  
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.”

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

## XX.

### The Spirit of the Soldier.

TEXT—"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed with white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life."—Rev. 3: 5.

The Apocalypse, with all its mysteries of flaming sword and sounding trumpet and smoking vial and clanking chains, contains much that is transparent and sweet. What is more comforting than the beatitudes pronounced upon the faithful churches mentioned here? What is more inspiring than these promises to him that overcometh? There are six such promises; "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written. He that overcometh and keepeth my works to the end, to him will I give power. Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne. He that overcometh shall be clothed with white raiment and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life."

If we convert all these promises into one definite beatitude, the result is something like this: "Blessed are they that overcome, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Further warrant for such interpretation is in the words of the Master when he spoke of the Baptist, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." This

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sounds strange, the terms are so contradictory—"the Kingdom of Heaven" and "violence." If the Kingdom of Heaven suggests anything it suggests peace. Is it not a paradox upon the face of it, the Kingdom of Peace suffering violence and being taken by force? It is a paradox upon the face of it, but not so beneath the surface.

Mr. Elbert Hubbard in his essay on Madam Guyon says, "We cannot get peace by working for it like fury." He is in error. That is just the way, the only way, to get peace—by striving for it. There is no peace like that which follows a good fight. We have just demonstrated that proposition upon a large scale in the war with Spain. The history of Cuba for the last fifty years has been one of constant agitation. We thought it necessary for our own peace to end the strife. We fought to do it, and peace has come to the Pearl of the Antilles. Between two contrary ideas there never can be peace until one idea goes down. It may have to be cut to pieces by swords, or torn to pieces by bullets, or blown to pieces by torpedoes, but out of the strife, out of the violence, peace will come.

It was so with the slavery question in America. The Puritan and the Cavalier held antagonistic views of slavery. There was constant friction. Lovejoy was murdered at Alton. Phillips was mobbed in Boston. Sumner was assaulted in the Senate. There was not a college in the country in which Northern and Southern youth were students together, whose dormitory and playground were not the scenes of quarrel and strife. It was as Lin-

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coln said, the nation could not stand half slave and half free. There could be no peace except through conflict. The war was long and bitter and bloody, but peace came out of it, peace that can never be broken, peace, with violets growing on battlefields, and robins nesting in the cannon's mouth.

These incidents in national history are parables of human life. Christ came as the Prince of Peace, yet He came bringing a sword. He came to bring the peace that follows heroic use of the blade. The peace that never knew a struggle is not peace, but stagnation. The peace that issues out of struggle is the peace of victory, of power that overcomes. But the words of Christ and the words of the text have no reference to nations, primarily. They are addressed to men individually, and they affect nations only so far as they affect the units of which nations are composed. The voice that calls us to conquest is a voice speaking to the spirit of man, appealing to us who have said, "Soul take thy ease," a summons to a sterner view of life than is common in these days.

It was Bacon who said, "Men must know that in this theater of human action, it remains only for God and angels to be lookers-on." An old Greek proverb ran, "Good things are difficult." It was this proverb Plato quoted against those who promised the young men of Athens an easy path to wisdom. There has never been a race that approached civilization that did not have some such proverb. We have such phrases as these—the struggle of life, the conflict of life, the battle of life. This is a serious

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view of things, but it is the right view. Life is a series of struggles. In the first place there is the struggle for existence. I do not mean the struggle for bread and butter, but the struggle for life itself against the thousand enemies of life. A child has to run a gauntlet to get to manhood. Unnumbered diseases strike at him. Hidden enemies hurl their weapons. Disease lurks in ambush. Death crouches at every corner. Then there is the struggle for education. I do not mean the struggle with poverty, but the struggle that comes from contact with the stubborn mysteries of knowledge, the struggle that ensues when a student ascends the hill and storms the citadel of truth. Hardly is this battle begun before the youth discovers that he is involved in another—the struggle for character, the conflict with himself, with evil without and its allies within.

The struggle for life, for learning, for character may be carried on selfishly. "I want to live. I want to learn. I want to be." Professor Drummond says, "After the struggle for existence comes the struggle for others' existence." Even while a man is meeting the problems which concern himself, his health, his culture, his character, he must become aware that there are other problems, which concern the health, the culture, and the character of other people, and as a social being he must grapple with them. Has he conquered himself? Has he silenced the sin-promptings that lured him to ill? He must help other men in their unequal strife. He must meet the great questions of his age and of his race.

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It seems to be comparatively easy to arouse the martial spirit in men. A leader of contagious ardor has only to cry a crusade and he has his followers, be they regulars, or rebels, or filibusters. There is a soldier spirit in man, a something which delights in the tented field and the bristling line of steel.

Christianity creates no new faculties, but it turns the faculties we have to a new and nobler use. How much there is in the Gospel to appeal to the martial spirit, how many calls to fight, resist, assail, and overcome. To the wrestler it says, "Wrestle, but not against flesh and blood." To the fighter, it says, "Fight, but not as one that beateth the air." To the runner, it says, "So run that ye may obtain." To the soldier it says, "Put on the whole armor—here is the helmet, here the shield, here the sword"—that means fighting at close range. And to all, it says, "He that overcometh shall sit down with me on my throne."

Christianity has appealed to the heroic in man. Think of the hymns of the church which enshrine the spirit of militancy. Christianity has done more than evoke martial music, it has inspired the sons of men to martial deeds. Ten of the original twelve disciples of our Lord died soldiers' deaths. Paul died the death of a soldier. What a magnificent figure is that of Chrysostom, defying earthly power, and saying to the monarch who had threatened to banish him, to confiscate his treasures, to put him to death, "Thou canst not banish me, for the world is my Father's house. Thou canst not take my treasures, for my treasures are in Heaven.

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Thou canst not slay me, for my life is hid with Christ in God." So the warrior of Christ was able to overcome. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

In the early days of Christianity no man could be a disciple who did not have the spirit of a soldier. The world was so evil, the visible forces of civilization were so hostile to the name of the Nazarene, that to bear His name was a challenge to the world. Times have changed since then. Christian Emperors reign. Czars issue proclamations in the name and spirit of Christ. Kaisers kneel on the Mount of Olives and make pilgrimages to Bethlehem. But the fight is not yet ended. There is much still to overcome, much in the territory of our own lives—pride, and fear, and passion, and impatience, and selfishness. And without are hostile conditions to be overcome which are all the more difficult to defeat because they are impersonal, irresponsible, indefinite in character, though very definite in effect.

To attack a condition is like attacking a pestilence. You know that it is, but you are not sure what it is or where it is. It is in the air you breathe, in the water you drink, in the soil you build upon. The immortal names of Christian history are those of men who have attacked and overcome unchristian conditions. Savonarola, Luther and Wesley wrestled against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places. They protested against the spirit of their times. It is not for us to fight such battles, to demand of

## The Spirit of the Soldier.

Lorenzo the freedom of Florence, to face the representatives of Rome in Diet assembled, to organize movements in the Church destined to outgrow the Church. But it is for every soldier of Jesus Christ to fight the good fight of faith against the spirit of unfaith; of brotherhood against caste; of active philanthropy against the policy of laissez faire; of hope against despair; of a spiritual religion against absorbing secularism; of the Kingdom of God against every kingdom that is arrayed against it.

"Blessed is He that overcometh." Here stands a youth in the early morning of life, well-armed to overcome, but he says, "What is there for me to overcome?" Are you sure you have overcome yourself? Have you command of your own forces? Is conscience supreme? Where duty calls are you ready to reply, "I come?" That costs a struggle. Many a man has to wrestle with himself, not like Jacob with the angel for a single night, nor for a single year, but till time furrows his face, and age whitens his hair. One of the most liberal men I know tells me his whole life has been a struggle with inborn avarice. You would never think it from his princely giving. He has overcome himself. A very successful soul winner in New York a generation ago struggled for years with the appetite for drink. Seven times he fell and seven times he rose again, at last to fall no more. He conquered himself, and, having overcome, he sought to help others overcome. In him the struggle for existence became the struggle for others' existence.

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Jesus said to Peter, "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." That is the program of Christianity. Hast thou come to the throne of self-conquest? There are other kingdoms to conquer, other thrones to possess. There is the throne of sympathy—that is for thee. There is the throne of service—that is for thee. There is the throne of sacrifice—that is for thee, and it is not far from the throne of God.

Bless thou the truth to us, O Lord of truth. May the message of this hour mean to us a call to more heroic living, a call to bear our share in the battle. Give us courage to identify ourselves with the cause of righteousness, however unpopular it may be, whatever denial of ease and honor it may involve. May we do what is in our power, by Thy spirit working in us, to make the life of this city and this world diviner. Amen.

The Gathering of the People.

"O Christ, even Thou art highest and Lord,  
Master of Worlds and this heart of mine,  
Lowliest one and most adored,  
Most human and near when most divine."

—F. W. GUNSAULUS.

*Songs of Night and Day*: "Erytheia."

"True or not true, the entire story of the Cross from its commencement in prophetic aspiration to its culmination in the Gospel, is by far the most magnificent presentation in literature. And surely the fact of its having all been lived does not detract from its poetic value. Nor does the fact of its being capable of appropriation by the individual Christian of to-day as still a vital religion detract from its sublimity. Only to a man wholly destitute of spiritual perception can it be that Christianity should fail to appear the greatest exhibition of the beautiful, the sublime, and of all else that appeals to our spiritual nature, which has ever been known upon our earth."

—GEORGE JOHN ROMANES.

*Thoughts on Religion*. Page 171.

## XXI.

### The Gathering of the People.

TEXT—"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."—Gen. 49: 10.

This is one of the earliest Messianic prophecies. It foretells the attractiveness of the Son of Man. Similar prophecies were spoken in later ages. David said, "Unto Thee shall all flesh come." Isaiah wrote, "Gentiles shall come to Thy light and kings to the brightness of Thy rising." Haggai speaks of the coming One as "the desire of all nations." Our Lord Himself understood these prophecies to point to Him, and said, in accordance with them, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

Centuries have passed and we are beginning to see prophecy fulfilled. He who was crowned with thorns now wears the diadem of praise. The hand that was pierced holds the scepter of dominion. The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. The cry is in the air, "The world for Christ." The Star of Bethlehem is rising on the night of Asia. A learned Hindoo says, "None but Jesus shall have India." Long before the nations of Europe began to divide Africa among them, the representatives of the Gospel had planted there the banners of Immanuel. Africa belongs to Christ. There is a belt of Christian light around its border, East and West and South. The Islands of the Sea have received the Prince of Peace. It was

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no idle fancy of the prophet—"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

It needs no proof that there is something in the Gospel of Christ which appeals to the heart of the world. It needs no deep insight into the currents of modern thought to see the drift of things. Slowly move the great reforms, political, social, religious. But as surely as the "thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns," Christ is coming to rule the world. His legions have the swing of conquest. The victories of yesterday presage the victories of tomorrow. What is there in Christ which attracts men? What are the elements of his power?

The universality of His character draws men to Him. As the Son of Mary, He was a Jew, but He was also the Son of Man and as such He was neither Jew nor Gentile. David was a representative Jew, Caesar a representative Roman, Socrates a representative Greek. Jesus was more than a representative Hebrew. He was a representative MAN. He was not merely an Oriental, for He appeals to the Occidental mind. He was not merely an Occidental, for the Oriental mind calls Him its own. He was not merely an ancient for He sways the modern world. He is not merely a modern for He deeply impressed the ancient world.

Now who is this—a Jew, yet Greek in His love of beauty, and Roman in the sweep of His royal law? A child of Eastern climes yet equally a child of all climes. The most august figure of the first century, yet the most imperial figure of the nineteenth century. He is the Universal Man, in ad-

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miration of whose character all nations and all ages meet.

It is wonderful to see how manhood has grown through the centuries. The typical man of today is higher in everything, in knowledge, in truth, in power, in chivalry, than the man of yesterday. The word "manhood" suggests more to us than it suggested one hundred years ago, and it will suggest more a hundred years hence than it does today. We have outgrown the types of the past. Measuring them by our standards they are lacking in many things which we deem essential to the highest life. The twentieth century, measuring the nineteenth century man by its standards will find him lacking in much which attaches to the best manhood. But Christ's type of manhood will not be outgrown, for He is the perfect type of the Ideal Man. The fiftieth century man will look to Him, if the world shall stand so long, as the sculptor looks to the Hermes of Praxiteles or the Apollo Belvidere—the perfect figure from which nothing can be taken and to which nothing can be added.

Another element in the attractiveness of Jesus is the naturalness of His character. The inclination of human nature to extravagance has led many a saint, in his endeavor to be holy, to live an unnatural life. Some have imagined that they were proving their devotion to Christ by fasting, by seclusion from the world, by extraordinary self-inflicted tortures. In the fifth century of the Christian Era, under the reign of the Emperor Theodosius II, there flourished one Simon, a

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Syrian, who took up his abode on a lofty pillar, where the limited space forbade his sitting or lying down, and there exposed to the open sky by day and by night, he lived for more than forty years. The people thought him eminently pious, and sought to touch the hem of his garment for the healing of their diseases. For six hundred years he had disciples known as Stylites, or "pillar saints." It may be that they were pious, but it was a forced piety and had no warrant in the example of Christ. Jesus was no recluse. He did not seek to avoid contact with evil by isolating himself from, or elevating himself above, his fellow men. His piety was always sane. His virtues were always human. He indulged in no excess of zeal, or spectacular display of superior piety. He was good but not "goody good." He was in all things manly, sensible, natural.

The age in which we live is not greatly given to superfluous piety. India is over-run with sacred fakirs, "pillar saints;" but a natural Christianity is beginning to show India a more excellent way. But we have much to learn yet from the beautiful naturalness, the ideal naturalness, the "sweet reasonableness" of Christ. He practiced and asks us to practice no superhuman virtue. He teaches the necessity of self-denial, but not for its own sake. Suffering for suffering's sake has no place in Christianity. When the end sought demands self-immolation, when the spirit of life depends upon the body's death, then and only then are we to crucify the flesh.

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Some people indulge the notion that there is intrinsic virtue in pain, in misery, in gloom; that these are the natural accompaniments of a Christian life. The child must have had some such idea who justified the reading of a secular book on Sunday by explaining, that "it made her feel almost as bad as reading the Bible!" A Carolina Quaker had two family carriages, one black and somber, the other quite gaudy with a streak of yellow. The children liked to ride in the latter, but the father never allowed it to be used on the Sabbath. Church-going demanded something more like a hearse.

Would we might all rid ourselves of every trace of the notion that religion is something so foreign to humanity that it must be expressed in artificial ways. Let us learn wisdom from the Master, whose virtues were not strained, whose goodness was not machine-made, who lived a simple, free, unselfish, godly life and asks us only to follow Him.

"Unto Him is the gathering of the people," because He has a message for men. In other words He has what the world needs. That is the way to success everywhere—minister to the world's needs. It was a wise bit of advice an old man gave his son who proposed to put a large sum of money into a plant to manufacture a popular novelty—"Do not risk much; you are catering to the fancy of an hour; the novelty is the rage today but it meets no permanent need and it will be forgotten tomorrow." There are transient wants and there are eternal needs. The man who is down wants help to get up, to redeem his crown. The man who is up, who has

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climbed as high as man can climb, wants to know if his still unsatisfied aspirations have their satisfaction anywhere. The man who has animal propensities which human strength cannot curb, wants help to chain the tiger in his blood. The man who buried his little boy yesterday wants to know whether, if he lives aright, there shall not come a time when the little one will meet him at the gate of a deathless home. The man who is dying wants to know if this is a bare wall he is approaching, or if it is a door opening inwardly to the sanctuary of immortal life. We all want to know whether the end is darkness or whether it is light. These are the world's deep needs and the world gathers around Christ because he satisfies them. With a hand reached down to the man who falls, with a hand reached out to the man who climbs; with a word of rest to the weary and hope to the discouraged; with pardon for the sinner and grace to the striving, He leads the way to Eternal Life. And, so long as human need exists; so long as human weakness cries to the Divine for strength, "Gentiles shall come to His light, kings to the brightness of His rising, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

Through a Glass Darkly.

“ Yet all that I have learned (huge toils now past)  
By long experience, and in famous schools,  
Is but to know my ignorance at last.”

—WILLIAM, EARL OF STERLING.

*Recreations with the Muses.*

“ I laugh, for hope hath happy place with me,  
If my bark sinks, 'tis to another sea.”

—WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING. *A Poet's Hope.*

“ Through the dark and stormy night,  
Faith beholds a feeble light  
Up the blackness streaking;  
Knowing God's own time is best,  
In a patient hope I rest  
For the full day-breaking.”

—WHITTIER. *Barclay of Ury.*

## XXII.

### Through a Glass, Darkly.

TEXT—"Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."—1 Cor. 13: 12.

Long ago it was predicted that in ages to come many should run to and fro and knowledge be increased. Abundantly that prophecy has been fulfilled. Knowledge has been increased during the last few years. The invention of printing, the application of steam to locomotion, and the free school system of our day are the three human agencies chiefly responsible for the increase of human knowledge.

How much more we know of the world in which we live and of the universe of which it is a little part; how much more we know of ourselves—the universe within man, than our ancestors knew four centuries ago! The eighth-grade school child of today knows more about the earth, its elements and its inhabitants, than the philosopher of the eighteenth century. Knowledge has increased and is increasing daily. We are seeing more and learning more every hour. We can see the scars and wrinkles on the face of the moon, the shadows of its mountains across the sunless depths of its valleys. We can see the rings of Saturn, the satellites of Jupiter, the canals of Mars. We have journeyed

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through the jungles of Africa with Stanley, crossed the mountains of Thibet with Landor, stood under the flaming Aurora Borealis with Nansen.

Yet there is much we have not seen and do not know. The fact is, as knowledge increases mysteries multiply. The larger the outer circle of the known, the larger the inner circle of the unknown. We are like travelers among the Himalayas; each succeeding peak we climb brings into view a loftier peak beyond. It is still true, we see through a glass darkly and know only in part. Nature is a volume yet unread—we are not through the preface. The great cosmic forces which play about us are as mysterious to the scientist as to the savage. Gravity, electricity, and chemical affinity have kept their secrets well. The origin of life and the process of growth are problems no mind has ever solved, and without disparagement to the human intellect, we may say that they are problems no mind is ever likely to solve. We seem to have gone as far in that direction as we can go; we have come to the gulf—beyond this narrow neck of land there is no ground to stand upon. The poet knew the point at which the most ambitious mind confesses itself baffled. He plucked a flower and said,

“ Little flower—if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.”

There is something in a wayside flower we can only half see. There is something in the insect of a summer day that can be known only in part. And if we know so little of the meanest objects in

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nature, how much less do we know of man. Surrounded as we are by mysteries, we are ourselves the greatest mystery. The organ of knowledge, the mind—what do we know about it? Is not, as President Schurman says, in his essay on "Philosophical Agnosticism," "the metamorphosis of an object we see or hear into a conscious idea, a miracle in comparison with which the floating of iron or the turning of water into wine is easily credible?" And if we know so little about ourselves, how much less do we know about God! If the mind of man is a mystery what an infinitely greater mystery is that Mind which is to the human intelligence as the ocean to a dewdrop?

But, says one, "God has revealed Himself, so that we are not left to our unaided reason." That is true, He has given us a supernatural revelation of Himself in the Old and New Testaments, and in the Incarnate Word, so that we know Him as we could not if He had not spoken unto the fathers by the prophets, and unto us by His Son, Jesus Christ. And this revelation is not only a disclosure of God to man, but it is a disclosure of man to himself, so that we know ourselves as we could not were it not for this supernatural revelation. Nevertheless, the warmest friend of Christianity, its most devout disciple, must admit, and does admit, that we search in vain the Scriptures and the sayings of Christ for light on some questions touching both God and man.

It was a prophet to whom God had signally revealed Himself who said, "Verily Thou art a God

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that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior." Why is it, that with all our knowledge of God, of His power and wisdom in nature, of His righteousness in the moral law, and of His love in Jesus Christ, we still have fellowship with Isaiah, "Thou art a God that hidest Thyself?" Is it not because the more we know of God the more we recognize His greatness? There is a point in our examination of God's manifold revelation at which our understanding breaks down, at which symbols cease to reveal and begin to conceal.

Every man who has lived deeply knows that there are times when ordinary language is utterly inadequate to convey our meaning. Beyond the language of the lips is the language of the heart, and beyond that are thoughts too deep for any language of lip or eye or heart. It was because of the inadequacy of words that God came to earth to tell His children how He loves them. The sweet sad eyes of Jesus, His tears—aye, His tears, tell God's love as no speech could tell it. Behold the fullest revelation of God in the suffering Saviour.

Is not God revealed, unveiled, in Christ? His heart is unveiled. Christ is the bare and bleeding heart of God. O heart of God, divinely pleading and divinely patient, our hearts should melt at sight of Thee! But the mind of God, His thoughts, His plans, His purposes concerning the future of the race and concerning us individually—we cannot read them clearly. He hides Himself. We see through a glass darkly. We know in part.

There is much we should like to know: What is

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to be the result of the conflict of ages between good and evil? Is good to be the final goal of ill? Is love to quench the fires of hate? Is every image of God, however defaced, to be restored? These questions touch the issues of the Judgment Day. And when is the Judgment to come? Is Christ to appear before the thousand years of peace? Are there few that be saved? Where are our friends who have fallen asleep? Where shall we spend the first five minutes after death? What shall be our heavenly relationships? These are the questions the soul sends out as Noah sent the dove from the window of the ark over the whelming waters to find if land was anywhere in sight. Do our questions, like the dove, return to us with an olive branch? Some of them do, thank God. We have here and there a little olive branch. We see through a glass darkly, but we see. We know only in part but we do know in part. We know enough to trust in, to lean on, to live for.

Partial knowledge is not to be despised. A steamer is over-due. Anxious hearts are waiting for news from absent friends. A vessel reports having seen the ship, and having exchanged signals, and says, "Last Thursday in such and such latitude and longitude, all was well with the Cunarder, Etruria." That is but partial knowledge, yet we hail it with gladness. We shall know more presently. Clouded vision is better than no vision at all. An expert bee-hunter, it is said, can see a common honey-bee half a mile away. I cannot see a bumble-bee two hundred feet away, but I shall not

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put out my eyes because I can not see as clearly as some men. Indeed there are occasions when it is a great advantage to have a dark glass to look through; that is, you can discern through a semi-transparent glass that which would otherwise be impossible to see.

When we come to think how much we know about God, and that our knowledge of Him embraces that part of His character which is of greatest interest to us, that is, His emotional nature, His temper towards men, we may conclude that He is good to hide Himself. We know His love; were we to know His justice, His holiness, were He to flash upon us the white light of His righteousness, we might be so blinded as not to see His love. We need to know enough of His greatness to keep us reverent, enough of His holiness to keep us humble, but not so much as to cast us into perpetual despair when we contrast ourselves with Him.

Nor are we in such ignorance of our own nature and destiny as to be incapable of determining our course. With all our ignorance of ourselves, we know that we are here; we know Who put us here; we know what He wants us to do here; we know where we are going; we know how to get there. Is not this enough?

We are in a world of probation. We are on trial. What we shall be presently is determined by what we are now. The world is a field to be cultivated. We are to hoe our little row, "tend" our little patch, keep the weeds out, and see that something useful grows.

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God put us here. It is His appointment. He knew the place and chose us for it. There is something in the place and something in us which He designed should meet.

Our way is plain. Wherever there is need and we have the capacity to supply it, there is our work. Wherever ability and opportunity coincide, the hand of duty beckons with imperial authority which cannot be denied.

The end is no enigma. The riddle has been solved. We are not tramps or vagabonds, coming from nowhere and going nowhere. We are pilgrims to the Beautiful City, and in spite of the darkness of our earthly atmosphere, the fogs and vapors that rise from the valleys, the eye of faith can see the light that gleams through gates ajar.

The highway to the Beautiful City lies before us. We must follow Christ, our Pathfinder, our Forerunner. It is all our business here to follow Him, to put our feet into the footprints of the King. Did He fulfill all righteousness? We must do that. Did He meet the tempter and vanquish him—the tempter that appeals to pride and passion and presumption? We must do that. Did He go about ministering? We must do that. Did He wear a calm face when His heart was breaking? We must do that. Did He bear the cross of sacrifice with joy? We must do that. The way of the cross is the way of light.

Let us not be too anxious about the There and the Then. It is the Here and the Now which most concern us. We shall see with perfect vision and

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know as we are known after awhile if here and  
now we do the best we know by the grace of God.

" Here in the heart of this world,  
Here in the noise and the din,  
Here where our spirits are hurled  
To battle with sorrow and sin.  
This is the place and the spot  
For knowledge of infinite things :  
This is the kingdom where Thought  
Can conquer the prowess of kings.

" Wait for no heavenly life ;  
Seek for no temple alone ;  
Here in the midst of the strife  
Know what the sages have known.  
See what the Perfect One was,  
God in the depths of each soul ;  
God as the Light and the Law,  
God as beginning and goal.

" Earth is one chamber of heaven,  
Death is no grander than birth ;  
Joy in the life that is given,  
Strive for perfection on earth.  
Here in the turmoil and roar,  
Show what it is to be calm :  
Show how the spirit can soar,  
And bring back its healing and balm.

" Stand not aloof or apart,  
Plunge in the thick of the fight ;  
Here in the street and the mart  
This is the place to do right.  
Not in some cloister or cave,  
Not in some kingdom above ;  
Here on this side of the grave,  
Here should we labor and love."

**I Will Trust.**

“Faith is a higher faculty than reason.”

—BAILEY. *Festus*.

“Who knows nothing base  
Fears nothing known.”

—OWEN MEREDITH. *A Great Man*. Stanza 8.

“The man who consecrates his hours  
By vig'rous effort and an honest aim,  
At once he draws the sting of life and death ;  
He walks with nature, and her paths are peace.”

—YOUNG. *Night Thoughts*.

“Eyes to the blind  
Thou art, O God ! Earth I no longer see,  
Yet trustfully my spirit looks to Thee.”

—ALICE BRADLEY NEAL. *Blind*.

## XXIII.

### I Will Trust.

TEXT—"I will trust and not be afraid."—Isaiah 12: 2.

We boast of being free-born, yet when we come to reflect upon the real condition of humanity, was there ever a greater fallacy? Free-born, when from our very childhood we are fettered? We are a race of slaves—slaves to our own weakness and ignorance, slaves to custom, slaves to precedent, slaves to circumstances, slaves to fear and sin. Free-born? Nay, if any man is free it is not because he was born so, but because he has gained his freedom by fighting for it. Every man who is really free may say, like the Roman captain, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom."

Consider how we are enslaved by ignorance. Jehovah speaks through one of his prophets thus: "My people are in captivity through lack of knowledge." Ignorance is the veriest slavery on earth. It fetters our intellect and limits our activities. Not until we achieve knowledge do we enjoy freedom. Knowledge does not come by dreaming, or by praying, but by working, by digging, by the sweat of the brain.

Think how we are enslaved by sin. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" No Jewish slave pinioned to his master's door with a nail through his ear; no Roman slave with the brand on his forehead; no feudal slave bought and

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sold with the land he tilled; no African slave driven by the Arab whip, was ever more completely the chattel of another than he who gives free reign to his lower nature, who does the brutal bidding of his master passion. Nor are all the scorpion lashes of remorse sufficient to break the bondage.

Christ came to deliver man from all slavery. He was the first Great Emancipator. The good Czar Alexander and the great hearted Lincoln were only following feebly in His footsteps. He was anointed to preach deliverance to the captives and the opening of prison doors to them that were bound. By His truth he offers to free men from ignorance—not by giving them the truth, but by leading them into truth. By His grace He offers to free men from sin, to strengthen them in their struggles with the tempter.

There is another bondage that oppresses us, It is that of fear. It does not so limit us as ignorance; neither does it so degrade us as sin, but it unmans us, unfits us for our life's labor, defeats us in our best work. So, no one of us is free in the best sense until he can say with the prophet who had seen a vision of God upon the throne of the universe, "I will trust and not be afraid," or with the Psalmist, "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee."

There are a thousand things within the compass of human thought which have a tendency to darken our spirits with fear—the mysteries that enshroud us, the possibilities that await us, the unknown paths before us. We have our hours of eager expectation, but fear follows close upon the heels of

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hope, and when the flame of faith dies down upon the altar of our hearts, terror creeps in and fills us with all dark forebodings.

There is something in the nature of the unknown itself to create fear. A child passing through a forest at night startles at the unfamiliar shapes about him; they are terrible simply because he does not know what they are. If this were his accustomed path he would recognize in that spectral shape the blasted trunk of an old oak, and in that shadowy form a leafy bough sundered by the storm and fallen to the earth, and in that dark something a prostrate tree with the sod still clinging to its roots. But he does not know, so his heart beats like a trip-hammer and his feet cannot carry him fast enough. We are all like that child, children of an older growth, our ignorance not outgrown. We are traveling a path our feet have not pressed before. Just yonder something awaits us, we do not know exactly what; it may be exaltation, or it may be humiliation. Imagination creates unnumbered emergencies, incalculable difficulties, impassable barriers, all out of the unknown.

One says, "It is not the unknown that frightens me—it is the known; it is that I am in the hands of fate, inevitable fate. What fate appoints I have to accept, and fate has never been kind to me. It is so fitful; things seem to be prospering when suddenly, like a revolving idol in a pagan temple, fate turns its face towards another and my fortune fails." This is a heathen view of life, yet there are respectable people outside of heathendom who hold

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it. Goethe thus expresses it, "All is created and grows after order; yet o'er mankind's lifetime, the precious gift, rules an uncertain fate." Shakespeare is full of it, as in his Henry VI. "What fates impose, that men must needs abide." And we have conjured up a monstrous shambling god called fate, and stand in fear of him.

He is more reasonable who says, "It is not fate I fear, but men, evil-minded or narrow men; men who envy me or misunderstand me, and have it in their power to injure or destroy me." I say he is more reasonable since he is not speculating about the unknown. He is not imagining terrors. He knows men, their capacity to harass and annoy; he has seen their angry glances, their sullen looks; he has heard of their secret conspirings and so he fears something real. This fear of man has driven many a servant of God into bewilderment and despondency. It has embittered many a good man's life. Not at first was Frederick Robertson able to say when he was assailed, "I do not care." Not at first was General Gordon able to say, "I have supreme contempt for the babbling and blatant voices of the shallow mob."

There are those who tremble not at the unknown, and fear not fate, neither the face of man, but death—ah, death is another thing. To die among strangers it may be; to die with one's life work unfinished; to breast "the swellings of Jordan" alone; to pass away and be forgotten, and the world go on as if I had never lived, my name written only on the sand where the first advancing wave of time

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will blot it out forever—that is what some of us fear. And still others say, “I am afraid of what is after death, the possibility of final failure and exclusion from the presence of God. My errors, my secret sins, my presumptuous sins, all arise up before me when I think of the Judge on the Great White Throne. O, if I could only be delivered from this fear!”

Well, we may be free from all fear. And this is the secret of it; “I will trust and not be afraid.” This word “trust” in the Hebrew is a very strong one. It has its roots in a very graphic and intense idea. It signifies literally “to cling close, to cleave to.” This is trust, clinging to God, cleaving to him, twining our affections around him as a vine entwines its tendrils around a tree. As fear is a rival of faith, so faith is the cure of fear. The best way to be brave is to lean on God. A strong and loyal black woman who was assisting her convalescent mistress walking about the house, said in her quaint way, “Now honey, if you loves me, lean hard.” It is our weak faith that makes us a prey to our foolish fears and dishonors God. He says, through all the Book, “If you love me, trust me, and be not afraid.”

And why should we fear the unknown? Nothing is unknown to him who is our Guide. He knows the way, all the way, all our way. This is what comforted Job, “He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.” This is what inspired the Psalmist’s song, “The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.”

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And as to fate—There is no fate. We have not correctly spelled the word—it is Father, and His name is Love. To fear anything from fate, to hope for anything from fate, is to uncrown God in our hearts, to repudiate His Fatherhood and to lapse into the barbarism of that age which erected altars to the fates and offered sacrifices to propitiate the furies. If we could only get a view of God's Fatherhood, astrologers who profess to read our future in the stars, clairvoyants who predict by guessing at half and multiplying by two, dream-books, and charms that bring good luck to their wearers, would be put away among the childish things, and prayer and trust would be our rod and staff.

If there is any satisfaction in the thought that a blind and arbitrary fate is at the wheel, the unbeliever is welcome to it, but I prefer to trust a friendly Pilot; to believe that

“My bark is wafted to the strand  
By breath Divine,  
And on the helm there rests a hand  
Other than mine.

“One who has known in storm to sail  
I have on board,  
Above the roaring of the gale  
I hear my Lord.”

As to the fear of man, we do well to remember that some of the most salutary lessons of our lives are taught us by those whose attitude is altogether unfriendly. Our friends are blind to our faults, our enemies are blind to our virtues, therefore let us learn from both. “Blessed are they,” says an old philosopher, “who have discovered to me my

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own weaknesses." When we consider those who would bring about our ruin we should read again the rich promise of God to Israel, "The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways." He who maketh the wrath of man to praise Him and restraineth the remainder is able to deliver us in time of danger and make the weapons of our foes His instruments of praise. "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

But what about death? There is no death; it is but a shadow cast by a great light. The great light is just beyond. Death is a door opening inwardly to the sanctuary of all rest. It is a narrow line that we cross in passing into the country of the King, "the land of far distances." A very small boy looking at his first geography was puzzled to know the nature of that line girding the globe midway between the poles. It is called the Equator, and upon the maps it looks as wide as the line that represents the Great Wall of China. So the boy wondered what it was made of, and how ships got over it or around it. But he found out in time that the Equator is only an imaginary line, the unit of latitude. A traveler on the Southern seas remained on deck all night when the ship approached the Equator and said to the sailors, "Be sure to let me know when we cross the Equator." They told him, "We will cross it in an hour," and when the hour had come, there was no commotion, no excitement, no pause in the journey, the ship went

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grandly on. I think of death like that. We have marked it with a great black line, but we cross it in a moment and our lives glide on into another zone. It worries some of us because our Pilot does not tell us when we are to cross the line. It may be before the light of this day dies out of the West; it may not be until long after we step across the threshold of the new century. What matters it? Ours is the duty of today, His the disposal of to-morrow.

Bishop Warren voices the believer's confidence in his lines:

"I dropped a note in the sea,  
Lost, utterly lost it seemed to be  
As the swift ship sped along.  
But the winsome winds and the currents strong  
Drifted the note from the end  
Of the world to the hand of my best earthly friend.

"I was dropped off the world into space.  
Lost, utterly lost I seemed in the race  
As the swift world sped along.  
But the tides of love, than of seas more strong,  
That back to their Maker tend,  
Swept me on to the heart of my uttermost Friend."

But what if I leave my work unfinished? No life work, however long, is absolutely finished. Something is wanted to complete it. The last bar of the music is always unsung, the last chapter of the book always unwritten. Nevertheless, no life work is wholly unfinished if it be wrought in harmony with the mind of God. What looks unfinished to us may be complete in His sight. He calls not anyone of all his workers until they have accomplished that to which they were assigned. A

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dying soldier, one of the youthful veterans of our Civil War, held in his hand a crumpled paper on which were written some lines of which these are a part:

“My half day’s work is done,  
And this is all my part—  
To give a patient God  
My patient heart;  
“And grasp this banner still  
Though all the blue be dim  
These stripes as well as stars  
Lead after Him.”

And what about my name? Shall I be forgotten? Shall strangers stand above my dust and read my name upon the marble and say, “Who was he? What did he do?” As to that, the greatest names are not remembered long. But some who feared they might be forgotten are longest remembered. The youthful poet whose grave is under the blue sky of Italy wrote, “My name is writ in water.” But John Keats is not forgotten; if he wrote his name in water, it was “in the tears of those who mourn his early death.” An Irish woman used to bake bread and distribute it among the poor in New Orleans. The grateful memory of the people of that city has erected a monument in her honor such as might celebrate the services of a statesman. Long ago, in a village whose stones have crumbled back to dust, a humble woman anointed Jesus, and her memory is deathless wherever this Gospel is preached. The simplest life, the most obscure, is bound up in the immortality of the Kingdom of God, if it be lived with this in view—to do His will and incarnate His law of love.

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My words may reach some one who says, "All this I believe, I trust, but I should like to know that some one I love will hold my hand when heart and flesh shall fail." Fling to the winds your fears—you shall not be alone. Have you noticed that the clouds surrounding the mother and child in the Sistine Madonna resolve themselves into faces when you inspect the picture closely? Many of God's saints have found the cloud that opens to receive them at the hour of death a cloud of faces, faces they "have loved long since and lost awhile," faces of the friends of other days, and dearest of all, His face who passed through the cloud to prove that it is not impenetrable gloom.

But there is something after death which causes some to fear. What if I should be a castaway, a shipwrecked soul on the eternal sea? Again the Father says, "Fear not." Again the Savior says, "Be not afraid." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." No condemnation! The judgment has passed, the penalty of our sins was visited upon Him, the sinless One. And now the Father sees in Him the law answered, the sin atoned for, the guilty stain washed white as snow. "I will trust and not be afraid."

"Bold shall I stand in Thy great day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
Fully absolved through Thee I am,  
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame."

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"A Christian is God Almighty's gentleman."

—J. C. and A. W. HARE. *Guesses at Truth.*

"A Christian is the highest style of man."

—YOUNG. *Night Thoughts.*

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds,  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought ;

"Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef."

—TENNYSON. *In Memoriam.* Part xxxvi.

"Many men build as cathedrals were built, the part nearest the ground finished ; but that part which soars toward heaven, the turrets and the spires, forever incomplete."

—HENRY WARD BEECHER.

## XXIV.

### Called Christians.

**TEXT**—"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."—Acts 11: 26.

There are two Antiochs connected with New Testament history, Antioch in Syria, and Antioch in Pisidia. The former is the more important, since here was founded the first Christian Church among the Gentiles, here Paul started on his three great missionary journeys, and here the disciples were first called Christians. At the time referred to in the text, Antioch in Syria was the third city in the world, Rome and Alexandria being the first and second. It was a great city politically and commercially, and beautiful for situation. It stood twenty miles from the Mediterranean, where the river Orontes flows through a gap between the Lebanon and Taurus mountain ranges. The city was built at a bend in the river, "partly on an island, partly on the level which formed the left bank and partly on the steep and craggy ascent of Mount Silpius." Gardens and groves were cultivated on the green banks of the river and on the terraced hillsides. Magnificent buildings, aqueducts, amphitheatres, and baths adorned the streets. It is not strange the Greeks called it "Antioch, the Beautiful," and the Romans, "Queen of the East."

But Antioch was as wicked as it was beautiful. It was a place of license and corruption. Here flourished the worship of Apollo amidst the groves

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of Daphne with rites at once splendid and debasing. Here were practiced things we blush to read about in history and in historical romances. Yet in this place the Gospel found a footing. A little congregation of disciples gathered to talk about Jesus and His doctrines, to pray, to worship, to break the sacramental bread. Presently they attracted the attention of the city. Here was something new, something for which the language had no name—a philosophy or a religion centering in the name of One called Christ. These people greeted one another in His name, initiated members into their society in His name. They talked about His life, His death, His resurrection, His coming again. They buried their dead in His name, and carved His name upon their tombs. Christ was the one oft recurring word in their conversation. "Who is this Christ they tell about?" passed from tongue to tongue. Some said one thing and some another, but whatever their judgment may have been, there could be no doubt that His was the great name among these folk. "What shall we call them?" one asked another; and he replied, "Let us call them after the Man they follow, the Man whose disciples they are, Christ—let us call them Christians." And so it was that name was first heard in the world, twelve years after our Savior had disappeared from earthly sight.

Hitherto the disciples had borne other names, names applied to them in derision, "Galileans," "Nazarenes." And it is altogether likely there was derision in the term Christian when it was first used

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in Antioch. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that the term Christian was a reproach wherever heard for the first century and a half of the era. Yet that was the name which best fitted the disciples. He who invented it may have sought to shame the disciples into silence, but he was wiser than he knew, for Christ was the predominant influence among them. He was "the center, guide, impulse, pattern, strength, comfort, of their lives." All the Gospel they knew was in that name, Christ. For them there were no dogmatics, no apologetics, no theology. They had just gotten hold of the revelation of God in Christ, and they were leaning on that, building on it, living in it. They must, therefore, have recognized the fitness of the name applied to them and welcomed it as an unconscious testimony to their loyalty to the faith. They must have said, you call us Christ-men; that we are, and that we hope to be forever."

See how a name once odious becomes glorious in time. It is as some one has said, "The heroes and sages of today were the off-scouring of yesterday." The memory of the martyrs of Nero's time is crowned with the adoration of the world-wide church. One generation stones the prophets, and another garnishes their sepulchre. Rome burned Savonarola four hundred years ago, and now his name is written high above both Pope and Emperor. The great and noble sneered at Christians eighteen centuries ago, but the time has come when kings are proud to be called by the Galilean's name. The outcasts of Antioch are honored now.

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At first, the word Christian stood for just one idea, and that was devotion to the memory of Christ. It is not so today—Christianity has received a manifold interpretation, so that the word suggests much more to us than to those who first heard it. It suggests a philosophy, a philanthropy, a theology; it suggests Christendom; it suggests the best of everything the world contains, the best art, the best literature, the best statesmanship, the best life.

Whatever the term Christian stands for in its general application, it has its special significance when applied to individual life. To call a man a Christian is to ascribe to him certain qualities of character, certain habits and methods which distinguish him from others. That is to say, there is a definite Christian type of manhood, and to call a man a Christian is presumably to affirm that he conforms to that type. The question is, What is that type? What are its qualities? Wherein does it differ from the non-Christian type? In other words, What kind of a man do we look for under the name Christian? What have we a right to expect him to be? I answer:

One who believes in the Divine Fatherhood; one who believes in human brotherhood; one who believes in the heavenly dignity of life. Possibly this last term needs explanation. There are views of life which have no title to the term Christian. Such a view is expressed in the familiar epitaph,

"Life is a joke, and all things show it;  
I thought so once, and now I know it."

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That life is a jest some people think, and so they never set themselves to any serious task. The burden of the world rests lightly upon their shoulders. They would make all labor recreation, all school-time one vast play-day. Equally unchristian is that view of life which regards it as a blot, a blunder, a hopeless confusion of sorrows and of fears, the end of which, the grave, the sooner reached the better. Most suicides are the fruit of this philosophy. Browning is thoroughly Christian in saying,

"This world's not blot for us, nor blank;  
It means intensely, and means good;  
To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

And so is Kemble:

"A sacred burden is this life we bear,  
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly,  
Stand up and walk beneath it steadfastly,  
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin,  
But onward, upward till the goal you win."

There is a goal to win. Life's dignity rests upon life's destiny. It is not a noise between two silences. "Beyond these voices there is peace," but not silence, not darkness forever, but light. To reach that light, to know that peace, to wear that crown—this is the Christian's goal.

Moreover, in a Christian we look for one who makes truth—not absolute truth, but relative truth, truth as he perceives it—the rule of his life. Following this logically, we look for one who, receiving Christ as the revelation of God, the highest embodiment of truth, Truth Incarnate, loves, trusts, obeys, and follows Christ. This, in the last

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analysis, is the best definition of a Christian—a Christ-man; one who lives as nearly as he can as Christ would live under the same circumstances; one who solves difficult problems of duty by the use of the question, "What would Jesus do?"

It is a keen test of the heart of a man, the question, "What would Jesus do?" It is a royal law. Yet it is not a narrow law. It gives full play to human judgment. Here are two men each at a turning point in life, each asking himself, "Shall I do this or that, go here or there?" Each is anxious to determine his course with reference to the question, "What would Jesus do?" They may be two young men, choosing their professions; one becomes a minister, the other a business man. Or they may be two ministers, choosing their fields of labor; one elects to go to a foreign land, the other to remain at home. Or they may both elect to remain at home; but one decides to labor in the slums, the other to become the pastor of a Church on the Avenue. Who has been false to the royal law? Neither necessarily—that law is no machine, making all men after the same pattern. It is a royal law of liberty. To accept it is to consult the life of Christ in search of the right principles of living, principles so broad, so sane, so sweetly reasonable, that it is perfectly proper to say that if Jesus were in this man's place He would do this, and if he were in that man's place He would do that. The Christian is the one who adopts the principles of Christ as his own, applying them in the light of his particular faculties and his particular relations.

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It is quite easy to fall into error here, and to give offense by applying Christian principles to the conduct of others without considering what modifications are necessary because of differences of circumstances. What errors in judgment we commit because of our own incapacity to look at life's problems and life's duties from the other man's view point! What you should do in a thousand difficult places, I cannot judge; I must not judge. All I have a right to say is, "You must determine that by reference to the principles you have learned from Jesus Christ." This is the Christian way.

Liberty of judgment in moral determination does not however apply to matters of absolute right and wrong, to rights that can never be wrong, to wrongs that can never be right. So we look for certain moral qualities in him who is called, or who calls himself, a Christian. We look for honesty, as between man and man, in individual and corporate relations. We look for purity. Deadly and damnable is his sin who brings upon the name of Christ the reproach of uncleanness. For the man whose weakness betrays him into sudden error, there is divine pity, but for him who professes to follow Christ, yet lives a putrid life, the word is plain, "Renounce sin or renounce the holy name of Christ." We look for charity, for that disposition to kindness and good will which is "the end of the law, out of a good conscience, and of a pure heart, and of faith unfeigned." We look for cheerfulness, a certain hopefulness and content following faith in the

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great and good God, and in the omnipotent Christ. I do not mean unreasoning optimism which sees no evil in the world, but a rational optimism which sees that God is in the world, bringing the devices of evil to nought, and blessing even the feeblest efforts of his weakest saints.

A man who was greatly interested in Christian work, yet pursued it in the midst of bitter antagonism, dreamed a dream. He saw his enemies engaged in a two-fold occupation—tearing down a building which it seemed was his, and trying to build up one of their own. But he saw what they did not see—a host of angels, tearing down what his enemies built up, and building up what they tore down. The dream is a parable. Unseen forces are working against those who oppose the kingdom of God. The stars in their courses are fighting against Sisera. All creative power is on our side. We should not despair.

Are you a Christian? It is a worthy name. Be worthy of it. And when your friends come to sum up the lesson of your life, let it be said, "Here was—

'One who never turned his back but marched breast-forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake.'"







